

# READINGS

  

## *in* ETHICS

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*Edited by*

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and

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## PREFACE

In the opinion that a knowledge of the history of philosophy is indispensable to further critical and constructive work, history seemed also the most desirable introduction to ethics. Moreover, the students ought to be acquainted with the sources rather than depend wholly on second-hand material. But of the text-books available, those solely historical gave no extended selections, the source-books were too comprehensive for a one term introductory course, and no book combined source and explanation. Such an ideal combination has been the distant goal of the present attempt.

In the preparation of this book the following division of labor has obtained. Chapters I-VII, IX-X, XII, are the work of Dr. Gordon H. Clark; chapters XI, XIII-XVI of Professor T. V. Smith; and chapter VIII was contributed by Dr. Francis Palmer Clarke of the University of Pennsylvania.

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# READINGS IN ETHICS





## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

WHEN Socrates in the *Phaedo* was about to undertake a particularly intricate argument he warned his hearers against an all too frequent reaction. A man, without sufficient knowledge of an acquaintance's character, trusts him implicitly and is disappointed. In the next situation, with as little knowledge, he relies on another person who also proves unfaithful. Through a number of such experiences he becomes a hater of mankind and concludes all men are thoroughly unreliable. This is hasty, Socrates insists. For though many be weak in character, yet some are of the highest integrity.

By this illustration, Socrates wishes to save his friends from becoming haters of reasoning. Some arguments, though few in number, are good. But since mediocre and bad arguments together outnumber those which can be trusted, all should be carefully scrutinized. Otherwise, when our misplaced trust is revealed, we may become misologists.

Even in the most abstract of subjects, such a warning is not out of place. In ethics it is almost indispensable. For where one may entertain skeptical opinions, say on symbolic logic, without undue distress resulting, ill advised moral beliefs may cause irreparable damage. Perhaps only a few students turn in action from the extreme of blind provincialism to a more foolhardy and equally unreflective radicalism. Yet no doubt many are caused a mental torture above what is necessary to that period of life.

To stabilize the student, one may recall that some disturbance is normal and unavoidable. And if we expect it, we can prepare for it. Plato gave warning, in his delightful parable

of "The Cave," that such an experience was inevitable. He likens it to the blindness caused by leaving a dark cave and entering into the bright world of light above. Descartes, too, had the same experience, and for the benefit of those who were to follow, he writes a set of tentative rules. Just as one will not destroy his present home and live in the fields while a new one is a-building, but rather will prepare a temporary dwelling place until the new one is fit for occupancy, so he will live by those rules while examining and revising his most important beliefs.

If Descartes, whose problems were not essentially moral, needed such, what must we do while examining the very rules which govern us? Are we to speak the truth while investigating the advisability of truth speaking? Or should we give ourselves over unreservedly to lying at the first doubt? Or should we sometimes lie and sometimes be strictly truthful as we proceed from one state of mind to the next? And the same questions apply to stealing and to all other vices and virtues.

First then we must write down, as Descartes did, those things we most believe to be true. "It is my duty to be honest." "I ought always to tell the truth." "Murder is a crime; adultery, a heinous pollution." To these maxims, and whatever others we regard as sacred and fundamental, we must vow to be loyal, lest our immature reflection lead us to do what will cause us long and bitter remorse.

Having done these things, we are about ready to begin our study. In it we shall find many contradictory opinions and much confusion. But before we can judge of these contradictions we must endeavor to determine the purpose of the writer. It may be that two authors, or one author in two places, writing for different purposes, make statements that are only apparently conflicting and the confusion of which we are conscious may be in our own minds only. Therefore we must know what questions are being asked and to which question each answer belongs.

To formulate, then, the various questions that students of ethics have set for themselves, will be of great help. It will do most, we think, to remove the objection which too many students raise against too many courses, viz. "I studied it, but what is it all about?" If the student is to get any benefit from the course, he should have, at the beginning, at least a vague idea of what it is all about. But scholarly definitions are so loaded with intricate connotations that they are virtually meaningless to the novice. Instead then of a definition, we may do well to list some of these questions.

The very first question ever asked was, What things ought I to do? And every moralist since then has to some extent tried to answer. The early moralists occupied themselves chiefly with this one problem. Pythagoras gave his disciples rules for living, which range from the exalted insistence on loyal friendship to the command not to sit with the left leg crossed over the right. Among the Hebrews, God himself is said to answer in the books of the law. Such then are the results of asking, What things ought I to do?

The next question flows naturally and necessarily from the first. It is this, If I must be a loyal friend, if I must worship but one God only, what is meant by being a loyal friend, or what is meant by worshipping God? Owing to his life-long insistence on examining the meaning of the various virtues, the name of Socrates has been inseparably attached to this problem. If we must be just, what is justice? For if we do not know what justice is, how is it possible to be just, unless by accident, and this is no virtue?

Flowing as naturally from the second as the second flows from the first, comes the question, if the meanings of two virtues become mutually incompatible under certain conditions which is to be preferred? That virtues do sometimes conflict is testified by every consciousness. Who has not felt the opposing pulls of two duties? The answers to this problem are found in Plato and Aristotle, the Epicureans and in

all those who, arranging the virtues in ascending and descending scales, try to tell us what is the Highest Good. Once we find what the Highest Good is, then virtues are better or worse as they are more or less effective means of attaining the Highest Good.

Another question, later in time but more fundamental in importance, becomes prominent in modern ethics. It is this: If we say murder is wrong and justice is right, why is it wrong or right? What is the *basis* of morality? What makes an act right or wrong? Is a man under an obligation to do anything? Or is all morality an illusion, foisted on one group of people by another?

These questions, and especially the last, are by no means easy. For thousands of years men have been puzzling over them and the best we can do is to trust that we are coming nearer the final answer as time goes on. And as we study the answers that various men have given, and perhaps ourselves try to answer some, we must from first to last bear in mind just what kind of inferences are valid at various stages of our progress. If we are frightened at the possibility of morality's being an illusion, or if we grasp that possibility as an excuse for the unrestrained exercise of our most primitive emotions, are the inferences on which we ground our action legitimate and valid? If, after a few hours' study, we are unable to explain why moral obligation is binding on each individual, are we at liberty to conclude that it is not binding? And at each step we must be careful to draw no conclusion beyond the limits of our evidence.

Finally, is there any way of avoiding the mistakes of others? Can we approach nearer to the correct conclusions than have those preceding us? How can we be sure we are approaching the truth rather than going in the opposite direction? Permit a question. Many students participate in athletics. Now, if the quarter-back lie in bed for two weeks thinking steadily about football, will he be better fitted for

playing? Not only would he grow weak but would not his counterpane tactics be unsound as well? Clearly he must both think and check his thinking in practice.

Now, ethics has both a theoretical and a practical phase. To examine the meaning of justice requires intellect; to discharge our just obligations requires will power and action. Aristotle emphasizes this latter aspect by describing virtue as an habitual manner of acting and therefore parents should make their children practice the correct actions which when repeated became the enjoyable habit of virtue. A selection will be quoted in which Aristotle compares this procedure to learning to play the harp. And the added implication must be noted that as the better harpist is the better judge of music so the more virtuously a man lives the better he can discern right from wrong. The former aspect, the intellectual, is emphasized in the early Platonic dialogues. This text book, then, must choose to be either an exhortation to form good habits or an investigation, rather the history of the investigations, of what "right" and "good" mean. It is frankly the latter. Some students have been disappointed with this approach because it seems so impractical, and recent writers have called attention to the need of the student, who, away from home for the first time, meets serious temptations. The authors are far from being uninterested in the student's battle. Nothing would give them greater pleasure than to help him integrate his impulses and harmonize his interests with the highest good. But in the first place that is more effectually accomplished if not by the student himself then for him through personal contact; second, this is a course in philosophy and not a book of sermons. Yet philosophy is not ultimately impractical. If we cannot here solve the problems of fraternity politics, we hope to approach guiding principles applicable to all of life. The student must not expect too immediate a result, but the habit of reflection, which at its best the course is designed to initiate, if persisted in will be useful

in all situations. The persistence, and therefore the good of the course, is the student's affair. While the tutor may share the blame for an inefficient life, as some in the last few years have been protesting, it is pleasant for the tutor and wholesome for the student to believe that the major responsibility lies on the student himself. He already knows men whose ethical skill has degenerated into a faculty of inventing fallacious justifications for acts they know to be wrong. Ethics may do the same for him, or it may help him to self-respect. That is determined not so much in the class room as in the dormitory, not so much in college as in life.

## CHAPTER II

### PRE-PLATONIC PERIOD

DURING the sixth century before Christ, the earliest thinkers made considerable progress in natural philosophy, but until the later half of the fifth century little systematic attention was paid to ethics. Whatever moral principles the earlier men had were at best but loosely related to their philosophy. Heraclitus of Ephesus (500) comes nearest to relating his ethical to his cosmological theories. Having argued that the world is composed fundamentally of fire, and that our soul is a spark from the original fire, he later adds "it is pleasure or death for souls to become moist. . . . When a man is drunk he is led by the hand of a beardless boy, stumbling, not knowing whither he goes, for his soul is wet. A dry soul is wisest and best." But there is no extended theory.

Pythagoras, who lived before Heraclitus, organized a politico-philosophical-religious brotherhood, which continued in existence through several centuries, teaching a mathematical philosophy and emphasizing a certain way of life. The obscurity of the logical connection between these two aspects of Pythagoreanism finally produced a schism in the school, yet not before Plato in his day learned to respect them in both particulars. In addition to their peculiar rules, such as, one must not eat beans, they emphasized the acknowledged virtues of piety, temperance, bravery and especially friendship. By living virtuously the soul, which is immortal, will merit a happy life after death. But again no system is worked out.

The men who first emphasized ethical speculation as against the study of physics were the Sophists. As early as 450 B. C., though more prominently from 425 to 375 the

failure to find truth in nature became apparent. By means of a penetrating investigation of nature, and a constant dialectic among the rival schools, people began to see that no truth had been attained. For these reasons, the Sophists concluded that truth is impossible. Then moral truth also is impossible. Then we may act in any way we please. There is no right or wrong. The philosophical development necessitating this outcome is clean-cut. And, further, the social and political conditions aided the break-down of Greek morality. The geographical horizons, widened through the Persian wars, revealed strange customs which, after all, might be just as good, just as right, as the old Greek customs. The Peloponnesian wars with their attending graft and violation of public rights made an easy approach to the violation of private rights. Poetry and the drama contributed their share by dissecting morality, discovering its diseased condition and embarrassing it with questions.<sup>1</sup> This did not of course occur all at once. The early Sophists did not profess the immorality which the later ones based on their teaching. Protagoras and Gorgias were respectable gentlemen but this could hardly be said of their successors, Thrasyarchus and Callicles.

Against their doctrines, which will be reflected in the quotations from Plato, one forceful figure appears, Socrates.

Since Socrates unfortunately left no writings, our knowledge of him depends chiefly on the reports of two men intellectually very different from each other, Plato the philosopher and Xenophon the historian. In Plato's dialogues, Socrates appears as the main character but while in the earlier dialogues we have an historical portrait, in the later

<sup>1</sup> This period was one of unusual activity in many fields. Everyone knows something about its sculpture and architecture; the theatre, both tragic and comic, presents the model for ages to come; the political and military history, connected as it is with the civilization of the East, is of peculiar interest. The student is strongly urged, therefore, to spend a little leisure examining the life of these Greeks. What he finds will lend attraction to the scientific or philosophical development touched on in this course and after the final examination, when the course will be largely forgotten, it will remain with him as that vague, indescribable thing—"culture."



ones Socrates becomes merely the mouthpiece of Platonic philosophy. Xenophon, a man of practical affairs, unable to appreciate Socrates' real depth, instead of attributing too much philosophy to Socrates, took away much that he had and saw in him only an earnest convincing moral preacher. Yet by so doing, Xenophon saves us from considering Socrates—and in this respect Plato's account is not altogether adequate—as a man with no positive convictions and the worst of the Sophists, the conception his enemies actually adopted. By fitting Xenophon and Plato together, then, and with the little that Aristotle adds, we can trace Socrates' main position.

First, Socrates would not admit that truth was impossible of attainment. That sophistic conclusion was premature to say the least. Truth may be difficult to find, perhaps a single individual unaided may fail, but we are separated from truth by no impassable barrier. If the early physicists failed, it was because they used the wrong method; they were seeking in the wrong place. In so far as the Sophists denied the possibility of truth in natural science, they were right, but this should lead one to seek it in the psychological and moral field. And, besides, the way the Sophists made use of their skepticism shows that their conclusions were hasty. Though they deny knowledge is possible, yet they claim to be wiser than all others. They ridicule justice, piety, temperance, and yet do not know what they ridicule. A little questioning is all that is needed to prick the bubble of their conceit.

It was Socrates' chief delight to meet a young Sophist in the market place, flatter him by agreeing with his own opinion of himself, and with a confession of ignorance, ask to be taught. Since Socrates could not remember long lectures, the young man was to teach by answering questions which he speedily found too subtle for him. Thus Socrates was forced to remain in his original ignorance. These negative results gained for him the reputation of being the most skeptical and dangerous person in Athens and it was on the charge

of corrupting the youth that he was finally condemned to death. But Socrates was not confusing people just for the fun of it. He had a more profound purpose. Unless we find out what justice is, what courage, temperance, piety are, we can neither talk about them nor know what they command. The first task, then, is accurate definition of terms, and since there are more poor definitions than good ones, it is natural to expect more negative than positive results.

The method for discovering and testing definitions was also new with Socrates. It was induction. A definition, say of the beautiful, based on common knowledge, was proposed and then examined in the light of particular cases. Suppose the definition is, the beautiful is the useful, since blind eyes and decrepit race horses are ugly. But some things are very useful in doing evil and no one would include in the beautiful (fine, noble) that which is productive of evil. Hence the definition must be revised.

Without definition there can be no knowledge. Without knowledge there can be no virtue. Socrates assumed that everyone wants what is good for him, and if he knew how, would get it. Therefore all evil is the result of ignorance. To make the world a paradise, only education is needed. To the Greek mind it seemed impossible that a person could know what is good and deliberately choose evil. This facile assumption led to many an interesting paradox. The following quotation will illustrate not only the paradox but the Socratic irony and the inductive method. It is taken from Plato's dialogue *Lesser Hippias* (371 e to 376 c).<sup>2</sup>

### LESSER HIPPIAS

*Hipp.* And how, Socrates, could those who voluntarily do wrong and voluntarily and designedly do harm be better than

<sup>2</sup> From translation by H. N. Fowler, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1926.

those who do so involuntarily? And there seems to be good reason to forgive a man who unwittingly does wrong or speaks falsehood or does any other evil. And the laws surely are much more severe towards those who do evil and tell falsehoods voluntarily, than towards those who do so involuntarily.

*Soc.* Do you see, Hippias, that I speak the truth when I say that I am persistent in questioning wise men? And this is probably the only good thing about me, as I am otherwise quite worthless; for I am all wrong about facts, and do not know the truth about them. And it is to me sufficient proof of the truth of this, that when I come into contact with one of you who are famous for wisdom, and to whose wisdom all the Greeks bear witness, I am found to know nothing; for there is hardly a single thing about which you and I have the same opinion; and yet what greater proof of ignorance is there than when one disagrees with a wise man? But I have this one remarkable good quality, which is my salvation; for I am not afraid to learn, but I inquire and ask questions and am very grateful to him who answers, and I never failed in gratitude to anyone; for when I have learned anything I have never denied it, pretending that the information was a discovery of my own; but I praise the wisdom of him who instructed me and proclaim what I learned from him. And so now I do not agree with what you say, but disagree very strongly; and I know very well that this is my own fault, because I am the sort of man I am—not to give myself any greater title. For my opinion, Hippias, is the exact opposite of what you say; I think that those who injure people and do wrong and speak falsehood and cheat and err voluntarily, not involuntarily, are better than those who do so involuntarily. Sometimes, however, the opposite of this seems to me to be the case, and I am all astray about these matters, evidently because I am ignorant; but now at the present moment a sort of paroxysm of my disease has come upon me, and those

who err in respect to anything voluntarily appear to me better than those who err involuntarily. And I lay the blame for my present condition upon our previous argument, which causes those who do any of these things involuntarily to appear to me at this moment worse than those who do them voluntarily. So please do me a favour and do not refuse to cure my soul; for you will be doing me much more good if you cure my soul of ignorance, than if you were to cure by body of disease. Now if you choose to deliver a long speech, I tell you beforehand that you would not cure me—for I could not follow you—but if you are willing to answer me, as you did just now, you will do me a great deal of good, and I think you yourself will not be injured, either. And I might fairly call upon you also, son of Apemantus, for help; for you stirred me up to converse with Hippias; so now, if Hippias is unwilling to answer me, ask him in my behalf to do so.

*Eud.* Well, Socrates, I imagine Hippias will need no asking from us; for that is not what he announced; he announced that he would not avoid the questioning of any man. How is that, Hippias? Is not that what you said?

*Hipp.* Yes, I did; but Socrates, Eudicus, always makes confusion in arguments, and seems to want to make trouble.

*Soc.* Most excellent Hippias, I do not do these voluntarily at all—for then I should be wise and clever, according to you—but involuntarily, so forgive me; for you say, too, that he who does evil involuntarily ought to be forgiven.

*Eud.* And do not refuse, Hippias; but for our sake, and also because of your previous announcements, answer any questions Socrates asks you.

*Hipp.* Well, I will answer since you request it. Ask whatever questions you like.

*Soc.* I certainly have a great desire, Hippias, to investigate what we are just at present talking about, namely which are better, those who err voluntarily or those who err involun-

tarily. Now I think the best way to go at the investigation is this. Just answer. Do you call some one a good runner?

*Hipp.* I do.

*Soc.* And a bad one?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Now, he who runs well is a good runner, and he who runs badly a bad one; is it not so?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then does not he who runs slowly run badly, and he who runs fast run well?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* In a race, then, and in running, rapidity is a good thing, and slowness an evil.

*Hipp.* Why, of course.

*Soc.* Which, then, is the better runner, he who runs slowly voluntarily or he who does so involuntarily?

*Hipp.* He who does it voluntarily.

*Soc.* Well, then, is not running doing something?

*Hipp.* Yes, it is doing.

*Soc.* And if doing, is it not also performing some act?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then he who runs badly performs a bad and disgraceful act in a race?

*Hipp.* Yes, a bad act of course.

*Soc.* But he runs badly who runs slowly?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then the good runner performs this bad and disgraceful act voluntarily, and the bad runner involuntarily?

*Hipp.* So it seems.

*Soc.* In running, then, he who does bad acts involuntarily is worse than he who does them voluntarily?

*Hipp.* Yes, in running.

*Soc.* And how is it in wrestling? Which is the better wrestler, he who is thrown voluntarily, or involuntarily?

*Hipp.* He who is thrown voluntarily, as it seems.

*Soc.* But is it worse and more disgraceful in a wrestling match to be thrown or to throw one's opponent?

*Hipp.* To be thrown.

*Soc.* In wrestling also, then, he who performs bad and disgraceful acts voluntarily is a better wrestler than he who performs them involuntarily.

*Hipp.* So it seems.

*Soc.* And how is it in every other bodily exercise? Is not he who is the better man in respect to his body able to perform both kinds of acts, the strong and the weak, the disgraceful and the fine, so that whenever he performs bad acts of a bodily kind, he who is the better man in respect to his body does them voluntarily, but he who is worse does them involuntarily?

*Hipp.* That seems to be the case in matters of strength also.

*Soc.* And how about grace, Hippias? Does not the better body take ugly and bad postures voluntarily, and the worse body involuntarily? Or what is your opinion?

*Hipp.* That is my opinion.

*Soc.* Then ungracefulness when voluntary is associated with excellence of the body, but when involuntary with faultiness.

*Hipp.* Apparently.

*Soc.* And what do you say about the voice? Which do you say is the better? That which sings out of tune voluntarily, or involuntarily?

*Hipp.* That which does it voluntarily.

*Soc.* And that which does it involuntarily is the worse?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Would you choose to possess good or bad things?

*Hipp.* Good ones.

*Soc.* Would you, then, choose to possess feet that limp voluntarily, or involuntarily?

*Hipp.* Voluntarily.

*Soc.* But is not a limp faultiness and ungracefulness of the feet?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Well, is not dimness of sight faultiness of the eyes?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Which eyes, then, would you choose to possess and live with? Those with which one would see dimly and incorrectly voluntarily, or involuntarily?

*Hipp.* Those with which one would do so voluntarily.

*Soc.* Those parts, then, of yourself which voluntarily act badly you consider better than those which do so involuntarily?

*Hipp.* Yes; that is, in matters of that sort.

*Soc.* Well, then, one statement embraces all alike, such as ears and nose and mouth and all the senses—that those which act badly involuntarily are undesirable because they are bad, and those which do so voluntarily are desirable because they are good.

*Hipp.* I think so.

*Soc.* Well now, which instruments are better to have to do with, those with which a man does bad work voluntarily, or involuntarily? For instance, is a rudder better with which a man will involuntarily steer badly, or one with which he will do so voluntarily?

*Hipp.* One with which he will do so voluntarily.

*Soc.* And is not the same true of a bow and a lyre and flutes and all the rest?

*Hipp.* Quite true.

*Soc.* Well now, would you choose to possess a horse of such spirit that you would ride him badly voluntarily, or involuntarily?

*Hipp.* Voluntarily.

*Soc.* Then that spirit is better.

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then with the horse of better spirit one would do voluntarily the bad acts of that spirit, but with the one of worse spirit involuntarily?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* And is not that true of a dog, and all other animals?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Well now, then, in the case of an archer is it better to possess the mind which voluntarily misses the mark, or that which does so involuntarily?

*Hipp.* That which does so voluntarily.

*Soc.* Then that is the better mind for the purpose of archery?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Is, then, the mind also which errs involuntarily worse than that which errs voluntarily?

*Hipp.* Yes, in the case of archery.

*Soc.* And how is it in the art of medicine? Is not the mind which does harm to the patients' bodies voluntarily the more scientific?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* In this art, then, this mind is better than the other.

*Hipp.* It is better.

*Soc.* Well now, the more musical, whether with lyre or with flute, and in everything else that concerns all the other arts and sciences—is not that mind better which voluntarily does bad and disgraceful things and commits errors, whereas that which does so involuntarily is worse?

*Hipp.* Apparently.

*Soc.* And surely we should prefer to possess slaves of such minds that they voluntarily commit errors and do mischief, rather than such as do so involuntarily; we should think them better fitted for their duties.

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Well now, should we not wish to possess our own mind in the best possible condition?



*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Will it, then, be better if it does evil and errs voluntarily, or involuntarily?

*Hipp.* But it would be a terrible thing, Socrates, if those who do wrong voluntarily are to be better than those who do so involuntarily.

*Soc.* But surely they appear, at least, to be so, from what has been said.

*Hipp.* Not to me.

*Soc.* I thought, Hippias, they appeared to be so to you also. But now once more answer me: Is not justice either a sort of power or knowledge, or both? Or must not justice inevitably be one or other of these?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then if justice is a power of the soul, the more powerful soul is the more just, is it not? For we found, my friend, that such a soul was better.

*Hipp.* Yes, we did.

*Soc.* And what if it be knowledge? Is not the wiser soul more just, and the more ignorant more unjust?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* And what if it be both? Is not the soul which has both power and knowledge, more just, and the more ignorant more unjust? Is that not inevitably the case?

*Hipp.* It appears to be.

*Soc.* This more powerful and wiser soul, then, was found to be better and to have more power to do both good and disgraceful acts in every kind of action was it not?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Whenever, then, it does disgraceful acts, it does them voluntarily, by reason of power and art; and these, either one or both of them, are attributes of justice.

*Hipp.* So it seems.

*Soc.* And doing injustice is doing evil acts, and not doing injustice is doing good acts.

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* Will not, then, the more powerful and better soul, when it does injustice, do it voluntarily, and the bad soul involuntarily?

*Hipp.* Apparently.

*Soc.* Is not, then, a good man he who has a good soul, and a bad man he who has a bad one?

*Hipp.* Yes.

*Soc.* It is, then, in the nature of the good man to do injustice voluntarily, and of the bad man to do it involuntarily, that is, if the good man has a good soul.

*Hipp.* But surely he has.

*Soc.* Then he who voluntarily errs and does disgraceful and unjust acts, Hippias, if there be such a man, would be no other than the good man.

*Hipp.* I cannot agree with you, Socrates, in that.

*Soc.* Nor I with myself, Hippias; but that appears at the moment to be the inevitable result of our argument; however, as I was saying all along, in respect to these matters I go astray, up and down, and never hold the same opinion; and that I, or any other ordinary man, go astray is not surprising; but if you wise men likewise go astray, that is a terrible thing for us also, if even when we have come to you we are not to cease from our straying.

## CHAPTER III

### PLATO

(427-347 B. C.)

OF most philosophers we can state their precise positions, but no passage in Plato can be singled out with such definiteness. For his dialogues record at least three stages of development.<sup>1</sup> Probably the most brilliant, original, and profound thinker in the world's history, he was constantly revising his opinions so that the earlier viewpoints differ in several respects from the later. Shortly after Socrates' execution, Plato, his pupil for many years, wrote a series of dialogues to defend the memory of his master and to make known his method. These include, among others, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Protagoras* the last of this group, and *Lesser Hippias* which we have quoted. A developing literary ability distinguishes them rather than their philosophical content.

During this period he seems to have considered the good in life to be its pleasure. Not that he was unprincipled or licentious; his disgust and withdrawal from Athenian politics in which, owing to his family connections, he might easily have been an important figure testifies to his earnest moral convictions. The pleasures of even the slightest immorality, as well as the aggravated greed of politicians brings pain. To live well, then, we should choose pleasures which produce more pleasure and never lead to pain. This position, a form of Hedonism, is expressed in the *Protagoras*, but as we

<sup>1</sup> Our division of Plato's ethical life into three periods is of methodological value even if its factuality be disputed.

find it more fully stated in later writers, we shall not quote this dialogue.

Some years later, Plato visited Tarentum in Italy where he met Archytas, a Pythagorean. The Pythagoreans were exponents of a "strenuous" morality as opposed to "easy-going" hedonism. Further, their system emphasized the basis which a future life affords morality, an element often lacking in hedonism. Plato, perhaps already aware of the difficulties of his youthful opinions, and wonderfully impressed by the new world of thought revealed to him, adopted several of their views and to the end of his life never relinquished his belief in immortality. The dialogues he then wrote present a system which may be called Middle or Standard Platonism, and include the transition period in *Gorgias*, and then *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and the *Republic*. Although this is sometimes called Standard Platonism, his most original and profound work is the material in the much later dialogues, *Sophist*, *Politicus*, *Timaeus*, and *Philebus*. These are much more difficult and do not contain so large a proportion of ethical material. However, there will be a selection from *Philebus*.

The swing from his early hedonism which held that good is identical with pleasure, to the strenuous morality of strict virtue was at first a little extreme. In the *Phaedo* at least, if not in the *Gorgias*, he teaches that all pleasure is evil because it interferes with study. This asceticism he had to modify. Some pleasures, though not all, are legitimate and good, but this very statement implies a higher standard by which we are to judge pleasures. The readmission of pleasure as an element in the good life is found in the *Republic* but more conspicuously in the *Philebus*. Plato's insistence on immortality, however, is not affected by this relaxing and mellowing of his ascetic period. That the activities of this life ought to be determined with regard to the character of the

next is his conviction, not only in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedo*, but also in his very latest works.

The first selection, an argument against overestimating the value of pleasure, is taken from the dialogue *Gorgias*. Plato, because he considered oral discussion rather than written exposition the ideal method of philosophical instruction, wrote entirely in dialogue form. With the exception of the late dialogues, Socrates is the chief speaker and is the advocate for Plato's views. The present dialogue consists of three conversations, one with Gorgias, one with Polus and one with Callicles. While discussing the nature of rhetoric with Gorgias, who is pictured as a powerful orator, Socrates is interrupted by Polus who wants explained a relevant ethical point. Granting that the orator sways the masses as Polus proudly claims, and thus controls the city, Socrates insists that the ability to do or have done what one thinks best is a dangerous power if one makes a mistake in thinking.

Because Polus at first wants to brush aside such reasoning as ethereal, Socrates presents his position in two compelling paradoxes: first, To do wrong is a greater evil than to suffer wrong at the hands of another; second, Having done wrong, it is worse to escape than to accept the punishment.

The proof depends on the common opinion that although to do wrong harms a man less, still it is more shameful than being harmed. But shameful means productive either of pain or evil or of both. To do a wrong obviously is not more painful, therefore it must be more evil if more shameful. Then by a further argument, comparing punishment to medicine, he shows that to escape punishment is far worse than being punished.

Callicles finds it impossible to accept either the argument or the conclusion. Polus was forced to the conclusion because he shamefully accepts the convention which calls dishonesty

and injustice shameful. The Law of Nature, illustrated in the animal world, in international relations and in athletics, is that only the fittest survive. He alone is truly happy who, like the tyrant, can impose his will on all others. Conventional morality is slave morality, but the world belongs to the strong. Philosophy is a pleasant diversion for boys, but it is the man of action who does things. Might makes Right!

The frankness of this avowal pleases Socrates but he is unable to understand exactly what is meant by the "fittest," "the strong" or "Might." Evidently numerical strength is not intended, for this is how the masses have made the conventional morality to which Callicles objects. Nor does the world belong to the strong in the sense of the few wise men. It is absurd to give all the medicine to the physician and all the clothes to the tailor, simply because the one is wise in medical matters and the other in sartorial adornment. Rather he is strong who can impose his will on others, who rules but is not ruled, even by himself. Self-control is slave morality. Luxury, licentiousness and liberty is Callicles' demand. At this point the selection begins.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> To make sure that the following selections are understood, the student should make an outline of the argument. As an aid for this selection and as a model for others this outline is suggested. Note that the underlying thought is that if Callicles is to condemn any kind of gratification whatsoever, he must distinguish between good and pleasure. An example of a very disgusting pleasure has been produced and Callicles inconsistently condemns it. But an example is not a proof, and therefore our selection is necessary.

To prove that Good is not unconditional enjoyment.

Courage and Knowledge are different from pleasure.

If pleasure is identical to Good,

Then Courage and Knowledge are different from the Good, (not Good).

Socrates will deny the conclusion for the following reasons.

To be happy and to be wretched are opposite states.

A person can not enjoy Good and suffer Evil at once.

Hunger itself is painful and eating pleasurable.

Since we eat while hungry, we enjoy pleasure and suffer pain at the same time.

Therefore pleasure is not the Good and pain not itself Evil.

Further, the pleasure and the pain cease together, whereas Good and Evil come and go alternately.

Second proof.

If pleasure and Good are identical, then the pleased man is the Good man.

GORGIAS<sup>3</sup>

*Soc.* But look here, my gifted friend, perhaps the good is not mere unconditional enjoyment: for if it is, we have to face not only that string of shameful consequences I have just shadowed forth, but many more besides.

*Call.* In your opinion, that is, Socrates.

*Soc.* And do you, Callicles, really maintain that it is?

*Call.* I do.

*Soc.* Then are we to set about discussing it as your serious view?

*Call.* Oh yes, to be sure.

*Soc.* Come then, since that is your opinion, resolve me this: there is something, I suppose, that you call knowledge?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* And were you not saying just now that knowledge can have a certain courage coupled with it?

*Call.* Yes, I was.

*Soc.* And you surely meant that they were two things, courage being distinct from knowledge?

*Call.* Quite so.

*Soc.* Well now, are pleasure and knowledge the same thing, or different?

*Call.* Different, I presume, O sage of sages.

*Soc.* And courage too, is that different from pleasure?

*Call.* Of course it is.

*Soc.* Come now, let us be sure to remember this, that Callicles the Acharnian said pleasant and good were the same, but knowledge and courage were different both from each other and from the good.

This makes a moron as good as a scientist.

And a coward perhaps better than a hero.

Then after considerable argument not reproduced in this book, Plato explains in mythical form the relation of the future life to morality. The pagination is 495b to 499b and 524b to the end.

<sup>3</sup> From the dialogue *Gorgias*, translated by W. R. M. Lamb, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1925.

*Call.* And Socrates of Alopece refuses to grant us this; or does he grant it?

*Soc.* He does not; nor, I believe, will Callicles either, when he has rightly considered himself. For tell me, do you not regard people who are well off as being in the opposite condition to those who are badly off?

*Call.* I do.

*Soc.* Then if these conditions are opposite to each other, must not the same hold of them as of health and disease? For, you know, a man is never well and ill at the same time, nor gets rid of health and disease together.

*Call.* How do you mean?

*Soc.* Take, for instance, any part of the body you like by itself, and consider it. A man, I suppose, may have a disease of the eyes, called ophthalmia?

*Call.* Certainly.

*Soc.* Then I presume he is not sound also at that time in those same eyes?

*Call.* By no conceivable means.

*Soc.* And what say you, when he gets rid of his ophthalmia? Does he at that time get rid too of the health of his eyes, and so at last is rid of both things together?

*Call.* Far from it.

*Soc.* Because, I imagine, this would be an astonishing and irrational result, would it not?

*Call.* Very much so.

*Soc.* Whereas, I take it, he gets and loses either in turn?

*Call.* I agree.

*Soc.* And so with strength and weakness in just the same way?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* And speed and slowness?

*Call.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And so too with good things and happiness and their



opposites—bad things and wretchedness—does one take on each of these in turn, and in turn put it off?

*Call.* Absolutely, I presume.

*Soc.* Then if we find any things that a man puts off and retains at one and the same moment, clearly these cannot be the good and the bad. Do we admit this? Now consider very carefully before you answer.

*Call.* Oh, I admit it down to the ground.

*Soc.* So now for our former admissions: did you say that being hungry was pleasant or painful? I mean, hunger itself.

*Call.* Painful, I said; though eating when one is hungry I call pleasant.

*Soc.* I see: but at all events hunger itself is painful, is it not?

*Call.* I agree.

*Soc.* And so too with thirst?

*Call.* Quite so.

*Soc.* Then am I to ask you any further questions, or do you admit that all want and desire is painful?

*Call.* I admit it; no, do not question me further.

*Soc.* Very good: but drinking when one is thirsty you surely say is pleasant?

*Call.* I do.

*Soc.* Now, in this phrase of yours the words "when one is thirsty," I take it, stand for "when one is in pain"?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* But drinking is a satisfaction of the want, and a pleasure?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* So in the act of drinking, you say, one has enjoyment?

*Call.* Quite so.

*Soc.* When one is thirsty?

*Call.* I agree.

*Soc.* That is, in pain?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then do you perceive the conclusion,—that you say one enjoys oneself, though in pain at the same moment, when you say one drinks when one is thirsty? Or does this not occur at once, at the same place and time—in either soul or body, as you please? For I fancy it makes no difference. Is this so or not?

*Call.* It is.

*Soc.* But further, you say it is impossible to be badly off, or to fare ill, at the same time as one is faring well.

*Call.* Yes, I do.

*Soc.* But to enjoy oneself when feeling pain you have admitted to be possible.

*Call.* Apparently.

*Soc.* Hence enjoyment is not faring well, nor is feeling pain faring ill, so that the pleasant is found to be different from the good.

*Call.* I cannot follow these subtleties of yours, Socrates.

*Soc.* You can, but you play the innocent, Callicles. Just go on a little further, that you may realize how subtle is your way of reproving me. Does not each of us cease at the same moment from thirst and from the pleasure he gets by drinking?

*Call.* I cannot tell what you mean.

*Gorg.* No, no, Callicles, you must answer him, for our sakes also, that the arguments may be brought to a conclusion.

*Call.* But Socrates is always like this, Gorgias, he keeps on asking petty, unimportant questions until he refutes one.

*Georg.* Why, what does that matter to you? In any case it is not your credit that is at stake, Callicles; just permit Socrates to refute you in such manner as he chooses.

*Call.* Well then, proceed with those little cramped questions of yours, since Gorgias is so minded.

*Soc.* You are fortunate, Callicles, in having been initiated

into the Great Mysteries before the Little: I did not think that was the proper thing. So go on answering where you left off—as to whether each of us does not cease to feel thirst and pleasure at the same time.

*Call.* I grant it.

*Soc.* And so with hunger and the rest, does he cease to feel the desires and pleasures at the same time?

*Call.* That is so.

*Soc.* And also ceases to feel the pains and pleasures at the same time?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* But still he does not cease to have the good and bad at the same time, as you agreed; and now, you do not agree?

*Call.* I do; and what then?

*Soc.* Only that we get the result, my friend, that the good things are not the same as the pleasant, nor the bad as the painful. For with the one pair the cessation is of both at once, but with the other two it is not, since they are distinct. How then can pleasant things be the same as good, or painful things as bad? Or if you like, consider it another way—for I fancy that even after that you do not admit it. Just observe: do you not call good people good owing to the presence of good things, as you call beautiful those in whom beauty is present?

*Call.* I do.

*Soc.* Well now, do you give the name of good men to fools and cowards? It was not they just now but brave and wise men whom you so described. Or is it not these that you call good?

*Call.* To be sure it is.

*Soc.* And now, have you ever seen a silly child enjoying itself?

*Call.* I have.

*Soc.* And have you never seen a silly man enjoying himself?

*Call.* I should think I have; but what has that to do with it?

*Soc.* Nothing; only answer.

*Call.* I have seen one.

*Soc.* And again, a man of sense in a state of pain or enjoyment.

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* And which sort are more apt to feel enjoyment or pain, the wise or the foolish?

*Call.* I should think there is not much difference.

*Soc.* Well, that will suffice. In war have you ever seen a coward?

*Call.* Of course I have.

*Soc.* Well now, when the enemy withdrew, which seemed to you to enjoy it more, the cowards or the brave?

*Call.* Both did, I thought; or if not that, about equally.

*Soc.* No matter. Anyhow, the cowards do enjoy it?

*Call.* Very much.

*Soc.* And the fools, it would seem.

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* And when the foe advances, do the cowards alone feel pain, or the brave as well?

*Call.* Both.

*Soc.* Alike?

*Call.* More, perhaps, the cowards.

*Soc.* And when the foe withdraws, do they not enjoy it more?

*Call.* Perhaps.

*Soc.* So the foolish and the wise, and the cowardly and the brave, feel pain and enjoyment about equally, according to you, but the cowardly more than the brave?

*Call.* I agree.

*Soc.* But further, are the wise and brave good, and the cowards and fools bad?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then the good and the bad feel enjoyment and pain about equally?

*Call.* I agree.

*Soc.* Then are the good and the bad about equally good and bad? Or are the bad in some yet greater measure good and bad?

*Call.* Why, upon my word, I cannot tell what you mean.

*Soc.* You are aware, are you not, that you hold that the good are good by the presence of good things, and that the bad are so by the presence of bad things? And that the pleasures are the good things, and the pains bad things?

*Call.* Yes, I am.

*Soc.* Hence in those who have enjoyment the good things—the pleasures—are present, so long as they enjoy?

*Call.* Of course.

*Soc.* Then, good things being present, those who enjoy are good?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* Well now, in those who feel pain are not bad things present, namely pains?

*Call.* They are.

*Soc.* And it is by the presence of bad things, you say, that the bad are bad? Or do you no longer say so?

*Call.* I do say so.

*Soc.* Then whoever enjoys is good, and whoever is pained, bad?

*Call.* Certainly.

*Soc.* You mean those more so who feel these things more, and those less who feel less, and those about equally who feel about equally?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* Now you say that the wise and the foolish, the cowardly and the brave, feel enjoyment and pain about equally, or the cowards even more?

*Call.* I do.

*Soc.* Then just help me to reckon up the results we get from our admissions; for you know they say:

That which seemeth well, 'tis well  
Twice and also thrice to tell,

and to examine too. We say that the wise and brave man is good, do we not?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* And that the foolish and cowardly is bad?

*Call.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And again, that he who enjoys is good?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* And that he who feels pains is bad?

*Call.* Necessarily.

*Soc.* And that the good and the bad feel enjoyment and pain in a like manner, or perhaps the bad rather more?

*Call.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then is the bad man made bad or good in a like manner to the good man, or even good in a greater measure? Does not this follow, along with those former statements, from the assumption that pleasant things and good things are the same? Must not this be so, Callicles?

. . . . .

*Soc.* This, Callicles, is what I have heard and believed to be true; and from these stories, on my reckoning, we must draw some such moral as this: death as it seems to me, is actually nothing but the disconnection of two things, the soul and the body from each other. And so when they are disconnected from one another, each of them keeps its own condition very much as it was when the man was alive, the body having its own nature with its treatments and experiences all manifest upon it. For instance, if anyone's body was large by nature or by feeding or by both when he was alive, his corpse will be large also when he is dead; and if he was

fat, it will be fat too after his death, and so on for the rest; or again, if he used to follow the fashion of long hair, long-haired also will be his corpse. Again, if anyone had been a sturdy rogue, and bore traces of his stripes in scars on his body, either from the whip or from other wounds, while yet alive, then after death too his body has these marks visible upon it; or if anyone's limbs were broken in death. In a word, whatever sort of bodily appearance a man had acquired in life that is manifest also after his death either wholly or in the main for some time. And so it seems to me that the same is the case with the soul too, Callicles: when a man's soul is stripped bare of the body, all its natural gifts, and the experiences added to that soul as the result of his various pursuits, are manifest in it. So when they have arrived in presence of their judge, they of Asia before Rhadamanthus, these Rhadamanthus sets before him and surveys the soul of each, not knowing whose it is; nay, often when he has laid hold of the Great King or some other prince or potentate, he perceives the utter unhealthiness of his soul, striped all over with the scourge, and a mass of wounds, the work of perjuries and injustice; where every act has left its smirch upon his soul, where all is awry through falsehood and imposture, and nothing straight because of a nature that knew not truth: or, as the result of an unbridled course of fastidiousness, insolence, and incontinence, he finds the soul full fraught with disproportion and ugliness. Beholding this he sends it away in dishonour straight to the place of custody, where on its arrival it is to endure the sufferings that are fitting. And it is fitting that every one under punishment rightly inflicted on him by another should either be made better and profit thereby, or serve as an example to the rest, that others seeing the sufferings he endures may in fear amend themselves. Those who are benefited by the punishment they get from gods and men are they who have committed remediable offences; but still it

is through bitter throes of pain that they receive their benefit both here and in the nether world; for in no other way can there be riddance of iniquity. Both of those who have done extreme wrong and, as a result of such crimes have become incurable, of those are the examples made; no longer are they profited at all themselves, since they are incurable, but others are profited who behold them undergoing for their transgressions the greatest, sharpest, and most fearful sufferings evermore, actually hung up as examples there in the infernal dungeon, a spectacle and a lesson to such of the wrongdoers as arrive from time to time. Among them I say Archelaus also will be found, if what Polus tells us is true, and every other despot of his sort. And I think, moreover, that most of these examples have come from despots and kings and potentates and public administrators; for these, since they have a free hand, commit the greatest and most impious offences. Homer also testifies to this; for he has represented kings and potentates as those who are punished everlastingly in the nether world—Tantalus and Sisyphus and Tityus; but Thersites, or any other private person who was wicked, has been portrayed by none as incurable and therefore subjected to heavy punishment; no doubt because he had not a free hand, and therefore was in fact happier than those who had. For in fact, Callicles, it is among the powerful that we find the specially wicked men. Still there is nothing to prevent good men being found even among these, and it deserves our special admiration when they are; for it is hard, Callicles, and deserving of no slight praise, when a man with a perfectly free hand for injustice lives always a just life. The men of this sort are but few; for indeed there have been, and I expect there yet will be, both here and elsewhere, men of honour and excellence in this virtue of administering justly what is committed to their charge. One in fact there has been whose fame stands high among us and throughout the rest of Greece, Aristeides, son of Ly-



simachus; but most of those in power, my excellent friend, prove to be bad. So, as I was saying, whenever the judge Rhadamanthus has to deal with such an one, he knows nothing else of him at all, neither who he is nor of what descent, but only that he is a wicked person, and on perceiving this he sends him away to Tartarus, first setting a mark on him to show whether he deems it a curable or an incurable case; and when the man arrives there he suffers what is fitting. Sometimes, when he discerns another soul that has lived a holy life in company with truth, a private man's or any other's—especially as I claim, Callicles, a philosopher's who has minded his own business and not been a busybody in his lifetime—he is struck with admiration and sends it off to the Isles of the Blest. And exactly the same is the procedure of Aeacus: each of these two holds a rod in his hand as he gives judgment; but Minos sits as supervisor, distinguished by the golden sceptre that he holds, as Odysseus in Homer tells how he saw him—

Holding a golden sceptre, speaking dooms to the dead.

Now, for my part, Callicles, I am convinced by these accounts, and I consider how I may be able to show my judge that my soul is in the best of health. So giving the go-by to the honours that most men seek I shall try, by inquiry into the truth, to be really good in as high a degree as I am able, both in my life and when I come to die, in my death. And I invite all other men likewise, to the best of my power, and you particularly I invite in return, to this life and this contest, which I say is worth all other contests on this earth; and I make it a reproach to you, that you will not be able to deliver yourself when your trial comes and the judgment of which I told you just now; but when you go before your judge, the son of Aegina, and he grips you and drags you up, you will gape and feel dizzy there no less than I do here, and some one perhaps will give you, yes, a degrading box

on the ear, and will treat you with every kind of contumely.

Possibly, however, you regard this as an old wife's tale, and despise it; and there would be no wonder in our despising it if with all our searching we could somewhere find anything better and truer than this: but as it is, you observe that you three, who are the wisest of the Greeks in our day—you and Polus and Gorgias—are unable to prove that we ought to live any other life than this, which is evidently advantageous also in the other world. But among the many statements we have made, while all the rest are refuted this one alone is unshaken—that doing wrong is to be more carefully shunned than suffering it; that above all things a man should study not to seem but to be good both in private and in public; that if one becomes bad in any respect one must be corrected; that this is good in the second place,—next to being just, to become so and to be corrected by paying the penalty; and that every kind of flattery, with regard either to oneself or to others, to few or to many, must be avoided; and that rhetoric is to be used for this one purpose always, of pointing to what is just, and so in every other activity. Take my advice, therefore, and follow me where, if you once arrive, you will be happy both in life and after life's end, as this account declares. And allow anyone to contemn you as a fool and foully maltreat you if he chooses; yes, by Heaven, and suffer undaunted the shock of that ignominious cuff; for you will come to no harm if you be really a good and upright man, practicing virtue. And afterwards, having practiced it together, we shall in due course, if we deem it right, embark on politics, or proceed to consult on whatever we may think fit, being then better equipped for such counsel than we are now. For it is disgraceful that men in such condition as we now appear to be in should put on a swaggering, important air when we never continue to be of the same mind upon the same questions, and those the greatest of all—we are so sadly uneducated. Let us therefore take as our guide the doctrine now

disclosed, which indicates to us that this way of life is best—to live and die in the practice alike of justice and of all other virtue. This then let us follow, and to this invite every one else; not that to which you trust yourself and invite me, for it is nothing worth, Callicles.

The development of Plato's thought from the time he wrote the *Gorgias* until he wrote *Philebus*, the next selection, however engrossing to the reader and important to philosophy, can barely even be outlined in a few pages. While Plato forever remained satisfied with the general high moral tone of his position in the *Gorgias*, his argument, he thought, might be made more cogent and his views in some detail brought nearer the truth. As first he tended toward a more severe condemnation of pleasure. Taking as an historical setting the scene of Socrates' death, the most appropriate and powerful literary device available for so solemn a purpose, he constructed, in a dialogue whose philosophic value is surpassed by only one or two of his most mature works, a well-reasoned apologetic for strict asceticism. Pleasure, at this stage of his life, he seemed to regard as a distinct evil on the ground that it interfered with the highest development of man's personality. But later, forced by the recognition that some pleasures are indispensable to life itself, he began to admit "pure" pleasures into a properly balanced life.

As it was the custom in Greek literature, philosophy, and public opinion to regard four particular virtues as cardinal in importance, viz., justice, wisdom, courage, and temperance, each writer took pains to explain these four in detail. And since justice is a function of a government as well as a virtue of an individual, Plato, intensely interested in the welfare of his country, carefully worked out an ideal system of political science. In this work, the *Republic*, several times

the length of his other dialogues, he gives interwoven sociological and psychological explanations of these four cardinal virtues. Plato never lost interest in the practical affairs of government. His last work of any importance, written in old age was the *Laws*, an attempt, lengthier than the *Republic*, to modify the ideal state to fit actual conditions. Philosophy for Plato was not something far removed from the issues of life. It was rather a method of living. And since one must live in an organized community one must know political science and ethics. This, in turn, presupposes a knowledge of human psychology. But since human beings are contained in a material universe, parts of which can be of use to them, a man who wishes to live most rationally ought to have a knowledge of physics and astronomy. This, in turn, requires mathematics. And mathematics is founded on the science of logic and epistemology. Thus in the period between the *Republic* and the *Laws*, Plato's writings deal with the more profound or basic sciences; ethics reappears only in the *Philebus* and even here it is connected with intricate logical problems. *Philebus* was probably written just before the *Laws*. The rigorous asceticism of middle age is gone. Pleasure has a part in the good life. Nevertheless, he is willing to stand by his early views in the *Gorgias*. For of the five or six ingredients of the good life, pleasure, i. e. permissible pleasures, stands last.

### PHILEBUS \*

(or ON PLEASURE, Ethical)

*Characters:* SOCRATES, PROTARCHUS, PHILEBUS

*Soc.* Observe, then, Protarchus, what the doctrine is which you are now to accept from Philebus, and what our doc-

\* From *Philebus*, translated by H. N. Fowler, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1925. 11-13d; 19b-22c; 60-64.

trine is, against which you are to argue, if you do not agree with it. Shall we make a brief statement of each of them?

*Pro.* By all means.

*Soc.* Very well. Philebus says that to all living beings enjoyment and pleasure and gaiety and whatever accords with that sort of thing are a good; whereas our contention is that not these, but wisdom and thought and memory and their kindred, right opinion and true reasonings, are better and more excellent than pleasure for all who are capable of taking part in them, and that for all those now existing or to come who can partake of them they are the most advantageous of all things. Those are pretty nearly the two doctrines we maintain, are they not, Philebus?

*Phi.* Yes, Socrates, exactly.

*Soc.* And do you, Protarchus, accept this doctrine which is now committed to you?

*Pro.* I must accept it; for our handsome Philebus has withdrawn.

*Soc.* And must the truth about these doctrines be attained by every possible means?

*Pro.* Yes, it must.

*Soc.* Then let us further agree to this:

*Pro.* To what?

*Soc.* That each of us will next try to prove clearly that it is a condition and disposition of the soul which can make life happy for all human beings. Is not that what we are going to do?

*Pro.* It is.

*Soc.* Then you will show that it is the condition of pleasure, and I that it is that of wisdom?

*Pro.* True.

*Soc.* What if some other life be found superior to these two? Then if that life is found to be more akin to pleasure, both of us are defeated, are we not, by the life which has firm

possession of this superiority, but the life of pleasure is victor over the life of wisdom.

*Pro.* Yes.

*Soc.* But if it is more akin to wisdom, then wisdom is victorious and pleasure is vanquished? Do you agree to that? Or what do you say?

*Pro.* Yes, I at least am satisfied with that.

*Soc.* But how about you, Philebus? What do you say?

*Phi.* I think and always shall think that pleasure is the victor. But you, Protarchus, will make your own decision.

*Pro.* Since you entrusted the argument to me, Philebus, you can no longer dictate whether to make the agreement with Socrates or not.

*Phi.* True; and for that reason I wash my hands of it and now call upon the goddess herself to witness that I do so.

*Pro.* And we also will bear witness to these words of yours, But all the same, Socrates, Philebus may agree or do as he likes, let us try to finish our argument in due order.

*Soc.* We must try, and let us begin with the very goddess who Philebus says is spoken of as Aphrodite but is most truly named Pleasure.

*Pro.* Quite right.

*Soc.* My awe, Protarchus, in respect to the names of the gods is always beyond the greatest human fear. And now I call Aphrodite by that name which is agreeable to her; but pleasure I know has various aspects, and since, as I said, we are to begin with her, we must consider and examine what her nature is. For, when you just simply hear her name, she is only one thing, but surely she takes on all sorts of shapes which are even, in a way, unlike each other. For instance, we say that the man who lives without restraint has pleasure, and that the self-restrained man takes pleasure in his very self-restraint; and again that the fool who is full of foolish opinions and hopes is pleased, and also that the wise man takes pleasure in his very wisdom. And would not any person who

said these two kinds of pleasure were like each other be rightly regarded as a fool?

*Pro.* No, Socrates, for though they spring from opposite sources, they are not in themselves opposed to one another; for how can pleasure help being of all things most like pleasure, that is, like itself?

*Soc.* Yes, my friend, and colour is like colour; in so far as every one of them is a colour they will all be the same, yet we all recognize that black is not only different from white, but is its exact opposite. And so, too, figure is like figure; they are all one in kind; but the parts of the kind are in some instances absolutely opposed to each other, and in other cases there is endless variety of difference; and we can find many other examples of such relations. Do not, therefore, rely upon this argument, which makes all the most absolute opposites identical. I am afraid we shall find some pleasures the opposites of other pleasures.

*Pro.* Perhaps; but why will that injure my contention?

*Soc.* Because I shall say that, although they are unlike, you apply to them a different designation. For you say that all pleasant things are good. Now no argument contends that pleasant things are not pleasant; but whereas most of them are bad and only some are good, as we assert, nevertheless you call them all good, though you confess, if forced to it by argument, that they are unlike. Now what is the identical element which exists in the good and bad pleasures alike and makes you call them all a good?

*Pro.* What do you mean, Socrates? Do you suppose anyone who asserts that the good is pleasure will concede, or will endure to hear you say, that some pleasures are good and others bad?

*Soc.* But you will concede that they are unlike and in some instances opposed to each other.

*Pro.* Not in so far as they are pleasures.

*Soc.* Here we are again at the same old argument, *Pro-*

tarchus, and we shall presently assert that one pleasure is not different from another, but all pleasures are alike, and the examples just cited do not affect us at all, but we shall behave and talk just like the most worthless and inexperienced reasoners.

. . . . .

*Pro.* Consider, then what we are to do. For I think Socrates is asking us whether there are or are not kinds of pleasure, how many kinds there are, and what their nature is, and the same of wisdom.

*Soc.* You are quite right, son of Callias; for, as our previous discussion showed, unless we can do this in the case of every unity, every like, every same, and their opposites, none of us can ever be of any use in anything.

*Pro.* That, Socrates, seems pretty likely to be true. However, it is splendid for the wise man to know everything, but the next best thing, it seems, is not to be ignorant of himself. I will tell you why I say that at this moment. You, Socrates, have granted to all of us this conversation and your co-operation for the purpose of determining what is the best of human possessions. For when Philebus said it was pleasure and gaiety and enjoyment and all that sort of thing, you objected and said it was not those things, but another sort, and we very properly keep reminding ourselves voluntarily of this, in order that both claims may be present in our memory for examination. You, as it appears, assert that the good which is rightly to be called better than pleasure is mind, knowledge, intelligence, art, and all their kin; you say we ought to acquire these, not that other sort. When those two claims were made and an argument arose, we playfully threatened that we would not let you go home until the discussion was brought to some satisfactory conclusion. You agreed and put yourself at our disposal for that purpose. Now, we say that, as children put it, you cannot take back



a gift once fairly given. So cease this way of meeting all that we say.

*Soc.* What way do you mean?

*Pro.* I mean puzzling us and asking questions to which we cannot at the moment give a satisfactory answer. Let us not imagine that the end of our present discussion is a mere puzzling of us all, but if we cannot answer, you must do so; for you gave us a promise. Consider, therefore, whether you yourself must distinguish the kinds of pleasure and knowledge or will let that go, in case you are able and willing to make clear in some other way the matters now at issue among us.

*Soc.* I need no longer anticipate anything terrible, since you put it in that way; for the words "in case you are willing" relieve me of all fear. And besides, I think some god has given me a vague recollection.

*Pro.* How is that, and what is the recollection about?

*Soc.* I remember now having heard long ago in a dream, or perhaps when I was awake, some talk about pleasure and wisdom to the effect that neither of the two is the good, but some third thing, different from them and better than both. However, if this be now clearly proved to us, pleasure is deprived of victory; for the good would no longer be identical with it. Is not that true?

*Pro.* It is.

*Soc.* And we shall have, in my opinion, no longer any need of distinguishing the kinds of pleasure. But the progress of the discussion will make that still clearer.

*Pro.* Excellent! Just go on as you have begun.

*Soc.* First, then, let us agree on some further small points.

*Pro.* What are they?

*Soc.* Is the nature of the good necessarily perfect or imperfect?

*Pro.* The most perfect of all things, surely, Socrates.

*Soc.* Well, and is the good sufficient?

*Pro.* Of course; so that it surpasses all other things in sufficiency.

*Soc.* And nothing, I should say, is more certain about it than that every intelligent being pursues it, desires it, wishes to catch and get possession of it; and has no interest in anything in which the good is not included.

*Pro.* There is no denying that.

*Soc.* Let us, then, look at the life of pleasure and the life of wisdom separately and consider and judge them.

*Pro.* How do you mean?

*Soc.* Let there be no wisdom in the life of pleasure and no pleasure in the life of wisdom. For if either of them is the good, it cannot have need of anything else, and if either be found to need anything, we can no longer regard it as our true good.

*Pro.* No, of course not.

*Soc.* Shall we then undertake to test them through you?

*Pro.* By all means.

*Soc.* Then answer.

*Pro.* Ask.

*Soc.* Would you, Protarchus, be willing to live your whole life in the enjoyment of the greatest pleasure?

*Pro.* Of course I should.

*Soc.* Would you think you needed anything further, if you were in complete possession of that enjoyment?

*Pro.* Certainly not.

*Soc.* But consider whether you would not have some need of wisdom and intelligence and power of calculating your wants and the like.

*Pro.* Why should I? If I have enjoyment, I have everything.

*Soc.* Then living thus you would enjoy the greatest pleasures all your life?

*Pro.* Yes; why not?

*Soc.* But if you did not possess mind or memory or knowl-

edge or true opinion, in the first place, you would not know whether you were enjoying your pleasures or not. That must be true, since you are utterly devoid of intellect, must it not?

*Pro.* Yes, it must.

*Soc.* And likewise, if you had no memory you could not even remember that you ever did enjoy pleasure, and no recollection whatever of present pleasure could remain with you; if you had no true opinion you could not think you were enjoying pleasure at the time when you were enjoying it, and if you were without power of calculation you would not be able to calculate that you would enjoy it in the future; your life would not be that of a man, but of a mollusc or some other shell-fish like the oyster. Is that true, or can we imagine any other result?

*Pro.* We certainly cannot.

*Soc.* And can we choose such a life?

*Pro.* This argument, Socrates, has made me utterly speechless for the present.

*Soc.* Well, let us not give in yet. Let us take up the life of mind and scrutinize that in turn.

*Pro.* What sort of life do you mean?

*Soc.* I ask whether anyone would be willing to live possessing wisdom and mind and knowledge and perfect memory of all things, but having no share, great or small, in pleasure, or in pain, for that matter, but being utterly unaffected by everything of that sort.

*Pro.* Neither of the two lives can ever appear desirable to me, Socrates, or, I think, to anyone else.

*Soc.* How about the combined life, Protarchus, made up by a union of the two?

*Pro.* You mean a union of pleasure with mind or wisdom?

*Soc.* Yes, I mean a union of such elements.

*Pro.* Every one will prefer this life to either of the two others—yes, every single person without exception.

*Soc.* Then do we understand the consequences of what we are now saying?

*Pro.* Certainly. Three lives have been proposed, and of two of them neither is sufficient or desirable for man or any other living being.

*Soc.* Then is it not already clear that neither of these two contained the good? For if it did contain the good, it would be sufficient and perfect, and such as to be chosen by all living creatures which would be able to live thus all their lives; and if any of us chose anything else, he would be choosing contrary to the nature of the truly desirable, not of his own free will, but from ignorance or some unfortunate necessity.

*Pro.* That seems at any rate to be true.

*Soc.* And so I think we have sufficiently proved that Philebus' divinity is not to be considered identical with the good.

*Phi.* But neither is your "mind" the good, Socrates; it will be open to the same objections.

*Soc.* My mind, perhaps, Philebus; but not so, I believe, the true mind, which is also divine; that is different. I do not as yet claim for mind the victory over the combined life, but we must look and see what is to be done about the second place; for each of us might perhaps put forward a claim, one that mind is the cause of this combined life, the other that pleasure is the cause; and thus neither of these two would be the good, but one or the other of them might be regarded as the cause of the good. On this point I might keep up the fight all the more against Philebus and contend that in this mixed life it is mind that is more akin and more similar than pleasure to that, whatever it may be, which makes it both desirable and good; and from this point of view pleasure could advance no true claim to the first or even the second place. It is farther behind than the third place, if my mind is at all to be trusted at present.

. . . . .

*Soc.* Philebus says that pleasure is the true goal of every living being and that all ought to aim at it, and that therefore this is also the good for all, and the two designations "good" and "pleasant" are properly and essentially one; Socrates, however, says that they are not one, but two in fact as in name, that the good and the pleasant differ from one another in nature, and that wisdom's share in the good is greater than pleasure's. Is not and was not that what was said, Protarchus?

*Pro.* Yes, Certainly.

*Soc.* And furthermore, is not and was not this a point of agreement among us?

*Pro.* What?

*Soc.* That the nature of the good differs from all else in this respect.

*Pro.* In what respect?

*Soc.* That whatever living being possesses the good always, altogether, and in all ways, has no further need of anything, but is perfectly sufficient. We agreed to that?

*Pro.* We did.

*Soc.* And then we tried in thought to separate each from the other and apply them to individual lives, pleasure unmixed with wisdom and likewise wisdom which had not the slightest alloy of pleasure?

*Pro.* Yes.

*Soc.* And did we think then that either of them would be sufficient for any one?

*Pro.* By no means.

*Soc.* And if we made any mistake at that time, let anyone now take up the question again. Assuming that memory, wisdom, knowledge, and true opinion belong to the same class, let him ask whether anyone would wish to have or acquire anything whatsoever without these not to speak of pleasure, be it never so abundant or intense, if he could have no true opinion that he is pleased, no knowledge whatsoever of what he has felt, and not even the slightest memory

of the feeling. And let him ask in the same way about wisdom, whether anyone would wish to have wisdom without any, even the slightest, pleasure rather than with some pleasures, or all pleasures without wisdom rather than with some wisdom.

*Pro.* That is impossible, Socrates; it is useless to ask the same question over and over again.

*Soc.* Then the perfect, that which is to be desired by all and is altogether good, is neither of these?

*Pro.* Certainly not.

*Soc.* We must, then, gain a clear conception of the good, or at least an outline of it, that we may, as we said, know to what the second place is to be assigned.

*Pro.* Quite right.

*Soc.* And have we not found a road which leads to the good?

*Pro.* What road?

*Soc.* If you were looking for a particular man and first found out correctly where he lived, you would have made great progress towards finding him whom you sought.

*Pro.* Yes, certainly.

*Soc.* And just now we received an indication, as we did in the beginning, that we must seek the good, not in the unmixed, but in the mixed life.

*Pro.* Certainly.

*Soc.* Surely there is greater hope that the object of our search will be clearly present in the well mixed life than in the life which is not well mixed?

*Pro.* Far greater.

*Soc.* Let us make the mixture, Protrachus, with a prayer to the gods, to Dionysus or Hephaestus, or whoever he be who presides over the mixing.

*Pro.* By all means.

*Soc.* We are like wine-pourers, and beside us are fountains—that of pleasure may be likened to a fount of honey, and

the sober, wineless fount of wisdom to one of pure, health-giving water—of which we must do our best to mix as well as possible.

*Pro.* Certainly we must.

*Soc.* Before we make the mixture, tell me: should we be most likely to succeed by mixing all pleasure with all wisdom?

*Pro.* Perhaps.

*Soc.* But that is not safe; and I think I can offer a plan by which we can make our mixture with less risk.

*Pro.* What is it?

*Soc.* We found, I believe, that one pleasure was greater than another and one art more exact than another?

*Pro.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And knowledge was of two kinds, one turning its eyes towards transitory things, the other towards things which neither come into being nor pass away, but are the same and immutable for ever. Considering them with a view to truth, we judged that the latter was truer than the former.

*Pro.* That is quite right.

*Soc.* Then what if we first mix the truest sections of each and see whether, when mixed together, they are capable of giving us the most adorable life, or whether we still need something more and different?

*Pro.* I think that is what we should do.

*Soc.* Let us assume, then, a man who possesses wisdom about the nature of justice itself, and reason in accordance with his wisdom, and has the same kind of knowledge of all other things.

*Pro.* Agreed.

*Soc.* Now will this man have sufficient knowledge, if he is master of the theory of the divine circle and sphere, but is ignorant of our human sphere and human circles, even when he uses these and other kinds of rules or patterns in building houses?

*Pro.* We call that a ridiculous state of intellect in a man,

Socrates, which is concerned only with divine knowledge.

*Soc.* What? Do you mean to say that the uncertain and impure art of the false rule and circle is to be put into our mixture?

*Pro.* Yes, that is inevitable, if any man is ever to find his own way home.

*Soc.* And must we add music, which we said a little while ago was full of guesswork and imitation and lacked purity?

*Pro.* Yes, I think we must, if our life is to be life at all.

*Soc.* Shall I, then, like a doorkeeper who is pushed and hustled by a mob, give up, open the door, and let all the kinds of knowledge stream in, the impure mingling with the pure?

*Pro.* I do not know, Socrates, what harm it can do a man to take in all the other kinds of knowledge if he has the first.

*Soc.* Shall I, then, let them all flow into what Homer very poetically calls the mingling of the vales?

*Pro.* Certainly.

*Soc.* They are let in; and now we must turn again to the spring of pleasure. For our original plan for making the mixture, by taking first the true parts, did not succeed; because of our love of knowledge, we let all kinds of knowledge in together before pleasure.

*Pro.* Very true.

*Soc.* So now it is time for us to consider about pleasures also, whether these, too, shall be all let loose together, or we shall let only the true ones loose at first.

*Pro.* It is much safer to let loose the true first.

*Soc.* We will let them loose, then. But what next? If there are any necessary pleasures, as there were kinds of knowledge, must we not mix them with the true?

*Pro.* Of course; the necessary pleasures must certainly be added.

*Soc.* And as we said it was harmless and useful to know all the arts throughout our life, if we now say the same of pleasures—that is, if it is advantageous and harmless for us to



enjoy all pleasures throughout life—they must all form part of the mixture.

*Pro.* What shall we say about these pleasures, and what shall we do?

*Soc.* There is no use in asking us, Protarchus; we must ask the pleasures and the arts and sciences themselves about one another.

*Pro.* What shall we ask them?

*Soc.* "Dear ones—whether you should be called pleasures or by any other name—would you choose to dwell with all wisdom, or with none at all?" I think only one reply is possible.

*Pro.* What is it?

*Soc.* What we said before: "For any class to be alone, solitary, and unalloyed is neither altogether possible nor is it profitable; but of all classes, comparing them one with another, we think the best to live with is the knowledge of all other things and, so far as is possible, the perfect knowledge of our individual selves."

*Pro.* "Your reply is excellent," we shall tell them.

*Soc.* Right. And next we must turn to wisdom and mind, and question them. We shall ask them, "Do you want any further pleasures in the mixture?" And they might reply, "What pleasures?"

*Pro.* Quite likely.

*Soc.* Then we should go on to say: "In addition to those true pleasures, do you want the greatest and most intense pleasures also to dwell with you?" "How can we want them, Socrates," they might perhaps say, "since they contain countless hindrances for us, inasmuch as they disturb with maddening pleasures the souls of men in which we dwell, thereby preventing us from being born at all, and utterly destroying for the most part, through the carelessness and forgetfulness which they engender, those of our children which are born? But the true and pure pleasures, of which you spoke,

you must consider almost our own by nature, and also those which are united with health and self-restraint, and furthermore all those which are handmaids of virtue in general and follow everywhere in its train as if it were a god,—add these to the mixture; but as for the pleasures which follow after folly and all baseness, it would be very senseless for anyone who desires to discover the most beautiful and most restful mixture or compound, and to try to learn which of its elements is good in man and the universe, and what we should divine its nature to be, to mix these with mind.” Shall we not say that this reply which mind has now made for itself and memory and right opinion is wise and reasonable?

*Pro.* Certainly.

*Soc.* But another addition is surely necessary, without which nothing whatsoever can ever come into being.

*Pro.* What is it?

*Soc.* That in which there is no admixture of truth can never truly come into being or exist.

*Pro.* No, of course not.

*Soc.* No. But if anything is still wanting in our mixture, you and Philebus must speak of it. For to me it seems that our argument is now completed, as it were an incorporeal order which shall rule nobly a living body.

*Pro.* And you may say, Socrates, that I am of the same opinion.

## CHAPTER IV

### ARISTOTLE

(384-322 B. C.)

AT about the age a modern student enters college, Aristotle began formal study in the school of Plato. For twenty years, i. e. until Plato's death, the world's two most exceptional intellects enjoyed each other's inspiration. But though so strangely close in time, in temperament they were strangely distant. While the Academy was the source of advanced mathematics Aristotle's equipment and tendencies, as manifested in his books on animals, were biological. Some rumors assert that Aristotle became hostile to the Academy and even to Plato himself, and, furthered by the vast difference in literary style, less adequately shown by the *Ethics* than by the *Metaphysics*, there has arisen the feeling that Plato and Aristotle represent contrasting extremes in philosophy. This is exaggeration. While Aristotle discerned serious difficulties in Plato's philosophy, and modified his system in important respects, yet very often it is nearer the truth to say that he systematized Plato's more mature conclusions. A great deal of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, is decidedly reminiscent of the various dialogues, though, as study shows, the former is not devoid of originality.

In the chapter on Plato it was necessary to omit large sections of his teaching. An important part of this concerned the Good, a concept of central importance. Before one can know the truth about virtue, before one can attain any truth at all, he must understand the Good. It is the source both of

all knowledge and all existence. This sort of transcendental Good, exceptionally subtle if not downright mysterious, Aristotle considers unintelligible. But the meaning of its minor manifestations, such as the good of a pruning-hook, to use Plato's own illustration, (*Rep.* Bk. I), Aristotle can well utilize in a treatise on ethics without involving the student in a metaphysical Good of the universe. For ethics concerns the good of man, what is good for man and what is man good for. These two questions are intimately connected. Before we can know the science of pruning-hooks, it is necessary to discover their use and how to care for them. We must do the same for man considered as a voluntary agent if we are to acquire the science of human conduct. Everything, pruning-hook and man, has a purpose, or end of action. It has been made in order to accomplish a given function. If it do so, it is a good pruning-hook or, as the case may be, a good man. What, then, is the end or purpose of man?

Any system of ethics which takes its start from the purpose or function of man is called a teleological system. As was seen in Plato's development, here it is well also to note how various concepts used in ethical theory presuppose philosophical or metaphysical enquiries of a more fundamental type. The concept of purpose has been a troublesome and difficult point in the construction of philosophic systems. Those who have struggled with it have often done so inadequately; some, who assume it without discussion, leave a serious lacuna in their thinking. And some, with more boldness than patience, deny there is any such thing. Aristotle considered, at least, that he had in other of his writings made the point sufficiently clear. He differs from Plato in refusing to subordinate all ends indiscriminately to one single universal end, the (Platonic) Good. Thus while his ethics is teleological, his complete system is not so in exactly the same sense as was Plato's. But even denying a universal

good, it still remains a logical possibility that the various ends to which a man can strive may be subsumed under one final human good. Granted that the activities of business have as an end the acquirement of wealth, it follows that in a series of actions the first action is done for the second, or has the second as an end, and the second the third until the final end, wealth, is attained. But the same man may initiate another series of actions which leads to the acquirement of esteem or honor. Can honor and wealth, and all other such ends be regarded as means to the final purpose of man or are there two or a few irreducibly ultimate ends? The problem of *essential* purpose is even more difficult than that of purpose; metaphysics must again be invoked. But for this course we restrict ourselves to discovering that Aristotle did not answer these questions with a categorical yes or no. They are not so simple as to exclude various distinctions. But by the choice of a single term Aristotle does seem to infer that there is one single end to which all human actions ultimately lead.

If we can select a word to denote this end, we may dispense with cumbrous phrases, but the selection of a name does not solve the problem. The word Happiness is chosen because of its connotations. The question remains, however, What is happiness? just as before we asked, What is the ultimate end or purpose of human actions in general?

Before being specific, we know by definition that it is something final or ultimate, that is, it is an object we choose for its own sake and not as a means to something beyond. And likewise, if final it must be self-sufficient; it requires nothing else to make it absolutely desirable. To describe it explicitly, however, we must know the essential purpose of man, that purpose by which man is distinguished from all else. If this be known, the conclusion may be drawn that Happiness consists in a *rational* and *virtuous* life. Rational and virtuous now remain to be explained. But Aristotle in-

sists that these explanations cannot compete in definiteness with those of mathematics. A child, aided merely by reference to apples or marbles, easily grasps the statement, twice two is four. And a little later in life geometrical principles are quite as easily deduced from a minimum of illustrations. The problems of ethics, on the other hand, present such complications that only with a wealth of experience can its principles be more or less vaguely discerned. Therefore it follows that children, with little knowledge of life, should receive practical moral training, rather than instruction in moral theory, and second, that even the reflective adult should not expect too great an accuracy in ethics. Indeed, to demand such accuracy shows one to be unreflective.

Although the nature of morality lacks the clarity and simplicity of mathematics, still we can analyze experience and arrive at conclusions sufficient for the guidance of life. For example, following the tendency which became more and more obvious in Plato as he advanced from the *Republic* to the *Philebus*, we see that virtue must be a median term between two extremes. To every virtue there are two corresponding vices. Take the case of generosity. If a man be too careless with his money we regard him as foolish and call him a spendthrift. If, on the other hand, he squeeze every penny, we say he is stingy. Thus generosity lies as a middle term between prodigality and miserliness. We do not claim it lies exactly in the middle as equally removed from both extremes. Usually generosity is a little more akin to prodigality, but it is a point on a line deviation from which in either direction spoils, proportionately to the amount of deviation, the life of the agent. So while generosity or any virtue is a mean between extremes, yet in respect to value it is an extreme—the noblest course of action possible.

The *Nicomachean Ethics*, which is the main source of Aristotle's views of the matter, consists of ten books. So

far, a few of the more important points in Book I and II have been mentioned. In Book III he discusses, for the first time in history, the vexatious problem of volition. After this discussion there follows to Book IX analyses of individual virtues in which Aristotle displays keen psychological insight into human nature and at the same time gives us a glimpse of the Greek way of looking at morality. It is in Book X that he continues with his more systematic presentation.

Constrasted with the ancients, modern custom has been wording the moral problem perhaps in a more highly developed fashion but certainly more obscurely to the superficial. When we talk about right and wrong and our duties to other people, the none too conscientious man, if he conclude that obligation is a fraud on the public, may consider that by so recognizing it he has now dispensed with morality. The original phrasing of the problem did not permit such a self-deception. The question the Greeks asked was, what kind of a life is the best for man to live. Callicles, in answering, might reject all current notions, but, since any answer whatsoever states obligations and duties of some kind, he has not dispensed with moral theory. We have seen how Aristotle partially answered by making the best life one of virtuous activity.

But the nature of man, his purpose or function, is not exhausted in moral virtue. Animals displaying many, if not all, such virtues are the heroes of stories which delight dog-lovers or horsemen and illustrate what we might truly call human sagacity, courage, and sometimes trickery. If man is different from the animals, if there is more to his nature, we must turn away from those characteristics which he has in common with other animate objects and search for his essential purpose. It is found in intellect; he can, at least some can, study philosophy. His ability in intellectual pursuits differentiates man from all else; it is this which makes

him a man, and if he is to be a good man this faculty must be developed to its acme.

The opening lines of the *Metaphysics* read:—"All men naturally desire knowledge. Their love of sense-perceptions illustrates it; for even apart from their utility they are appreciated for their own sake, and most of all the sense of sight. Not only in order to do things, but also when nothing is to be done, we choose sight, so to speak, rather than the others. The reason is that this of all the senses gives us the most information." A little further on, Aristotle says that only after the necessities of life had been provided for by the craftsman did some have the leisure for intellectual development. They then found time to wonder. The sphere of their wonder grew from trivial banalities to the perplexing puzzles which have troubled philosophers ever since. "Thus," says Aristotle, "if they took to philosophy to escape ignorance, it is patent that they were pursuing science for the sake of knowledge itself and not for any utilitarian applications."

Plato, too, through his life, had been coming more and more to this opinion. While he was always interested in what knowledge would accomplish in actual political situations, and in the *Republic* prescribed that the philosopher should descend from the world above and help men, yet occasionally as in *Theaetetus*, he makes the philosopher a veritable stranger among men, ignorant of the affairs of this world, but calm and sober in the dizzy heights of speculation where the practical man would lose all balance.

A man cannot lead a good life without being morally virtuous; neither can he be a good man without intellectual excellence as well. He must practice contemplation, pursue knowledge for knowledge's sake. Fully to understand what is meant by the contemplation of nature apart from utility one must compare Aristotle with those schools which denied that this was the highest form of life. The Epicureans



and the Stoics, as the next two chapters will indicate, held no very high opinion of pure theory. Lives of pleasurable or virtuous activity were their respective ideals.

More thoroughgoing was the denial of Aristotle's principles by the English Utilitarians and French Positivists. It is a long and intricate story, hardly proper material for an ethics text. But in short, at the dawn of modern experimental science, men had become disgusted with the scientifically sterile Aristotelianism prevalent through the Middle Ages. Experimenters began that series of investigations, discoveries, and inventions which has dazzled the contemporary mind. But at the same time, the thinkers of this period found it impossible to answer the questions, what is matter, what is electricity, what is gravitation? Their knowledge was limited to how these things acted. To know how things act is sufficient to use them for invention and since this is the dominant interest, it is not surprising that some should claim that the nature or essence of these things is unknowable, that man needs no knowledge in excess of his power, that the subjugation of nature for our utilization and not its contemplation for the satisfaction of our wonder is the ultimate aim in life. So the irony of fate opposes the scientific view of philosophy to the view of the father of most of the sciences. But however great the ascendancy of the modern theory, the student is warned against any oversimplification which, by the respected description of modern and scientific, blinds his eyes to a permanent acquisition of antiquity.

### NICOMACHEAN ETHICS<sup>1</sup>

We may now return to the Good which is the object of our search, and try to find out what exactly it can be. For

<sup>1</sup> All selections from Aristotle are taken from this work, Rockham's translation in the Loeb Series.

good appears to be one thing in one pursuit or art and another in another: it is different in medicine from what it is in strategy, and so on with the rest of the arts. What definition of the Good then will hold true in all the arts? Perhaps we may define it as that for the sake of which everything else is done. This applies to something different in each different art—to health in the case of medicine, to victory in that of strategy, to a house in architecture, and to something else in each of the other arts; but in every pursuit or undertaking it describes the end of that pursuit or undertaking, since in all of them it is for the sake of the end that everything else is done. Hence if there be something which is the end of all the things done by human action, this will be the practicable Good—or if there be several such ends, the sum of these will be the Good. Thus by changing its ground the argument has reached the same result as before. We must attempt however to render this still more precise.

Now there do appear to be several ends at which our actions aim; but as we choose some of them—for instance wealth, or flutes, and instruments generally—as a means to something else, it is clear that not all of them are final ends; whereas the Supreme Good seems to be something final or perfect. Consequently if there be some one thing which alone is a final end, this thing—or if there be several final ends, the one among them which is the most final—will be the Good which we are seeking. In speaking of degrees of finality, we mean that a thing pursued as an end in itself is more final than one pursued as a means to something else, and that a thing never chosen as a means to anything else is more final than things chosen both as ends in themselves and as means to that thing; and accordingly a thing chosen always as an end and never as a means we call absolutely final. Now happiness above all else appears to be absolutely final in this sense, since we always choose it for its own sake and never as a means to something else;

whereas honour, pleasure, intelligence, and excellence in its various forms, we choose indeed for their own sakes (since we should be glad to have each of them although no extraneous advantages resulted from it), but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, in the belief that they will be a means to our securing it. But no one chooses happiness for the sake of honour, pleasure, etc., nor as a means to anything whatever other than itself.

The same conclusion also appears to follow from a consideration of the self-sufficiency of happiness—for it is felt that the final good must be a thing sufficient in itself. The term self-sufficient, however, we employ with reference not to oneself alone, living a life of isolation, but also to one's parents and children and wife, and one's friends and fellow citizens in general, since man is by nature a social being. On the other hand a limit has to be assumed in these relationships; for if the list be extended to one's ancestors and descendants and to the friends of one's friends, it will go on ad infinitum. But this is a point that must be considered later on; we take a self-sufficient thing to mean a thing which merely standing by itself alone renders life desirable and lacking in nothing, and such a thing we deem happiness to be. Moreover, we think happiness the most desirable of all good things without being itself reckoned as one among the rest; for if it were so reckoned, it is clear that we should consider it more desirable when even the smallest of other good things were combined with it, since this addition would result in a larger total of good, and of two goods the greater is always the more desirable.

Happiness, therefore, being found to be something final and self-sufficient, is the End at which all actions aim.

To say however that the Supreme Good is happiness will probably appear a truism; we still require a more explicit account of what constitutes happiness. Perhaps then we may arrive at this by ascertaining what is man's func-

tion. For the goodness or efficiency of a flute-player or sculptor or craftsman of any sort, and in general of anybody who has some function or business to perform, is thought to reside in that function; and similarly it may be held that the good of man resides in the function of man, if he has a function.

Are we then to suppose that, while the carpenter and the shoemaker have definite functions or businesses belonging to them, man as such has none, and is not designed by nature to fulfill any function? Must we not rather assume that, just as the eye, the hand, the foot and each of the various members of the body manifestly has a certain function of its own, so a human being also has a certain function over and above all the functions of his particular members? What then precisely can this function be? The mere act of living appears to be shared even by plants, whereas we are looking for the function peculiar to man; we must therefore set aside the vital activity of nutrition and growth. Next in the scale will come some form of sentient life; but this too appears to be shared by horses, oxen, and animals generally. There remains therefore what may be called the practical life of the rational part of man. (This part has two divisions, one rational as obedient to principle, the other as possessing principle and exercising intelligence.) Rational life again has two meanings; let us assume that we are here concerned with the active exercise of the rational faculty, since this seems to be the more proper sense of the term. If then the function of man is the active exercise of the soul's faculties in conformity with rational principle, or at all events not in dissociation from rational principle, and if we acknowledge the function of an individual and of a good individual of the same class (for instance, a harper and a good harper, and so generally with all classes) to be generically the same, the qualification of the latter's superiority in excellence being added to the function in his

case (I mean that if the function of a harper is to play the harp, that of a good harper is to play the harp well) : if this is so, and if we declare that the function of a man is a certain form of life, and define that form of life as the exercise of the soul's faculties and activities in association with rational principle, and say that the function of a good man is to perform these activities well and rightly, and if a function is well performed when it is performed in accordance with its own proper excellence—if then all this be so, the Good of man proves to be the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue, or if there be several human excellences or virtues, in conformity with the best and most perfect among them.

Moreover, to be happy takes a complete lifetime. For one swallow does not make summer, nor does one fine day; and similarly one day or a brief period of happiness does not make a man supremely blessed and happy.

Let this account then serve to describe the Good in outline—for no doubt the proper procedure is to begin by making a rough sketch, and to fill it in afterwards. If a work has been well laid down in outline, to carry it on and complete it in detail may be supposed to be within the capacity of anybody; and in this working out of details Time seems to be a good inventor or at all events coadjutor. This indeed is how advances in the arts have actually come about, since anyone can fill in the gaps. Also the warning given above must not be forgotten; we must not look for equal exactness in all departments of study, but only such as belongs to the subject matter of each, and in such a degree as is appropriate to the particular line of enquiry. A carpenter and a geometrician both try to find a right angle, but in different ways; the former is content with that approximation to it which satisfies the purpose of his work; the latter, being a student of truth, seeks to find its essence or essential attributes. We should therefore proceed in

the same manner in other subjects also, and not allow side issues to outbalance the main task in hand.

Nor again must we in all matters alike demand an explanation of the reason why things are what they are; in some cases it is enough if the fact that they are so is satisfactorily established. This is the case with first principles; and the fact is the primary thing—it is a first principle. And different principles are learnt in different ways—some by induction, other by intuition, others again by some form of habituation; so we must endeavour to arrive at the principles of each kind in their natural manner, and must also be careful to define them correctly, since they are of great importance for the subsequent course of the enquiry. The beginning is admittedly more than half of the whole, and throws light at once on many of the questions under investigation.<sup>2</sup>

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It is this that gives rise to the question whether happiness is a thing that can be learnt, or acquired by training, or cultivated in some other manner, or whether it is bestowed by some divine dispensation or even by fortune. (1) Now if anything that men have is a gift of the gods, it is reasonable to suppose that happiness is divinely given—indeed of all man's possessions it is most likely to be so, inasmuch as it is the best of them all. This subject however may perhaps more properly belong to another branch of study. Still, even if happiness is not sent us from heaven, but is won by virtue and by some kind of study or practice, it seems to be one of the most divine things that exist. For the prize and end of virtue must clearly be supremely good—it must be something divine and blissful. (2) And also on our view it will admit of being widely diffused, since it can be attained through some process of study or effort

<sup>2</sup> Book I, Chapter VII.

by all persons whose capacity for virtue has not been stunted or maimed. (3) Again, if it is better to be happy as a result of one's own exertions than by the gift of fortune, it is reasonable to suppose that this is how happiness is won; inasmuch as in the world of nature things have a natural tendency to be ordered in the best possible way, and the same is true of the products of art, and of causation of any kind, and especially the highest. Whereas that the greatest and noblest of all things should be left to fortune would be too contrary to the fitness of things.

Light is also thrown on the question by our definition of happiness, which said that it is a certain kind of activity of the soul; whereas the remaining good things are either merely indispensable conditions of happiness, or are of the nature of auxiliary means, and useful instrumentally. This conclusion moreover agrees with what we laid down at the outset; for we stated that the Supreme Good was the end of the political science, but the principal care of this science is to produce a certain character in the citizens, namely to make them virtuous, and capable of performing noble actions.<sup>3</sup>

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Virtue being, as we have seen, of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue is for the most part both produced and increased by instruction, and therefore requires experience and time; whereas moral or ethical virtue is the product of habit (*ethos*), and has indeed derived its name, with a slight variation of form, from that word. And therefore it is clear that none of the moral virtues is engendered in us by nature, for no natural property can be altered by habit. For instance, it is the nature of a stone to move downwards, and it cannot be trained to move upwards, even though you should try to train it to do so by

<sup>3</sup> Book I, Chapter IX.

throwing it up into the air ten thousand times; nor can fire be trained to move downwards, nor can anything else that naturally behaves in one way be trained into a habit of behaving in another way. The virtues therefore are engendered in us neither by nature nor yet in violation of nature; nature gives us the capacity to receive them, and this capacity is brought to maturity by habit.

Moreover, the faculties given us by nature are bestowed on us first in a potential form; we develop their actual exercise afterwards. This is clearly so with our senses; we did not acquire the faculty of sight or hearing by repeatedly seeing or repeatedly listening, but the other way about—because we had the senses we began to use them, we did not get them by using them. The virtues on the other hand we acquire by first having actually practised them, just as we do the arts. We learn an art or craft by doing the things that we shall have to do when we have learnt it: for instance, men become builders by building houses, harpers by playing on the harp. Similarly we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts. This truth is attested by the experience of states: lawgivers make the citizens good by training them in habits of right action—this is the aim of all legislation, and if it fails to do this it is a failure; this is what distinguishes a good form of constitution from a bad one. Again, the actions from or through which any virtue is produced are the same as those through which it also is destroyed—just as is the case with skill in the arts, for both the good harpers and the bad ones are produced by harping, and similarly with builders and all the other craftsmen: as you will become a good builder from building well, so you will become a bad one from building badly. Were this not so, there would be no need for teachers of the arts, but everybody would be born a good or bad craftsman as the case might be. The same then is true of the virtues. It is by taking part in transac-



tions with our fellow-men that some of us become just and others unjust; by acting in dangerous situations and forming a habit of fear or of confidence we become courageous or cowardly. And the same holds good of our dispositions with regard to the appetites, and anger; some men become temperate and gentle, others profligate and irascible, by actually comporting themselves in one way or the other in relation to those passions. In a word, our moral dispositions are formed as a result of the corresponding activities. Hence it is incumbent on us to control the character of our activities, since on the quality of these depends the quality of our dispositions. It is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great, or rather of supreme, importance.<sup>4</sup>

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But it is not enough merely to define virtue generically as a disposition; we must also say what species of disposition it is. It must then be premised that all excellence has a twofold effect on the thing to which it belongs: it not only renders the thing itself good, but it also causes it to perform its function well. For example, the effect of excellence in the eye is that the eye is good and functions well; since having good eyes means having good sight. Similarly excellence in a horse makes it a good horse, and also good at galloping, at carrying its rider, and at facing the enemy. If therefore this is true of all things, excellence or virtue in a man will be the disposition which renders him a good man and also which will cause him to perform his function well. We have already indicated what this means; but it will throw more light on the subject if we consider what constitutes the specific nature of virtue.

Now of everything that is continuous and divisible, it is

<sup>4</sup> Book II, Chapter I.

possible to take the larger part, or the smaller part, or an equal part, and these parts may be larger, smaller, and equal either with respect to the thing itself or relatively to us; the equal part being a mean between excess and deficiency. By the mean of the thing I denote a point equally distant from either extreme, which is one and the same for everybody; by the mean relative to us, that amount which is neither too much nor too little, and this is not one and the same for everybody. For example, let 10 be many and 2 few; then one takes the mean with respect to the thing if one takes 6, since  $6 - 2 = 10 - 6$ ; this is the mean given by arithmetical proportion. But we cannot arrive by this method at the mean relative to us. Suppose that 10 lb. of food is a large ration for anybody and 2 lb. a small one: it does not follow that a trainer will prescribe 6 lb., for perhaps even this will be a large ration, or a small one, for the particular athlete who is to receive it; it is a small ration for a Milo, but a large one for a man just beginning to go in for athletics. And similarly with the amount of running or wrestling exercise to be taken. In the same way then an expert in any art avoids excess and deficiency, and seeks and adopts the mean—the mean, that is, not of the thing but relative to us. If therefore the way in which every art or science performs its work well is by looking to the mean and applying that as a standard to its productions (hence the common remark about a perfect work of art, that you could not take from it nor add to it—meaning that excess and deficiency destroys perfection, while adherence to the mean preserves it)—if then, as we say, good craftsmen look to the mean as they work, and if virtue, like nature, is more accurate and better than any form of art, it will follow that virtue aims at hitting the mean. I refer to moral virtue, for this is concerned with feelings and actions, in which one can have excess or deficiency or a due mean. For example, one can be frightened or bold, feel

desire or anger or pity, and experience pleasure and pain in general, either too much or too little, and in both cases wrongly; whereas to feel these feelings at the right time, on the right occasion, towards the right people, for the right purpose and in the right manner, is to feel the best amount of them, which is the mean amount—and the best amount is of course the mark of virtue. And similarly there can be excess, deficiency, and the due mean in actions. Now feelings and actions are the objects with which virtue is concerned; and in feelings and actions excess and deficiency are errors, while the mean amount is praised, and constitutes success; and to be praised and to be successful are both marks of virtue. Virtue, therefore, is a mean state in the sense that it aims at hitting the mean. Again, error is multi-form (for evil is a form of the unlimited, as in the old Pythagorean imagery, and good of the limited), whereas success is possible in one way only (which is why it is easy to fail and difficult to succeed—easy to miss the target and difficult to hit it); so this is another reason why excess and deficiency are a mark of vice, and observance of the mean a mark of virtue:

Goodness is simple, badness manifold.

Virtue then is a settled disposition of the mind as regards the choice of actions and feelings, consisting essentially in the observance of the mean relative to us, this being determined by principle, that is, as the prudent man would determine it.

And it is a mean state between two vices, one of excess and one of defect. Furthermore, it is a mean state in that whereas the vices either fall short of or exceed what is right in feelings and in actions, virtue ascertains and adopts the mean. Hence while in respect of its essence and the definition that states its original being virtue is the observance of the mean, in point of excellence and rightness it is an extreme.

Not every action or feeling however admits of the observance of a due mean. Indeed the very names of some essentially denote evil, for instance malice, shamelessness, envy, and, of actions, adultery, theft, murder. All these and similar actions and feelings are blamed as being bad in themselves; it is not the excess or deficiency of them that we blame. It is impossible therefore ever to go right in regard to them—one must always be wrong; nor does right or wrong in their case depend on the circumstances, for instance, whether one commits adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right manner; the mere commission of any of them is wrong. One might as well suppose there could be a due mean and excess and deficiency in acts of injustice or cowardice or profligacy, which would imply that one could have a medium amount of excess and of deficiency, an excessive amount of excess and a deficient amount of deficiency.

But just as there can be no excess or deficiency in temperance and justice, because the mean is in a sense an extreme, so there can be no observance of the mean nor excess nor deficiency in the corresponding vicious acts mentioned above, but however they are committed, they are wrong; since, to put it in general terms, there is no such thing as observing a mean in excess or deficiency, nor as exceeding or falling short in the observance of a mean.

We must not however rest content with stating this general definition, but must show that it applies to the particular virtues. In practical philosophy, although universal principles have a wider application, those covering a particular part of the field possess a higher degree of truth; because conduct deals with particular facts, and our theories are bound to accord with these.

Let us then take the particular virtues from the diagram.

The observance of the mean in fear and confidence is Courage. The man that exceeds in fearlessness is not desig-

nated by any special name (and this is the case with many of the virtues and vices) ; he that exceeds in confidence is Rash; he that exceeds in fear and is deficient in confidence is Cowardly. In respect of pleasures and pains—not all of them, and to a less degree in respect of pains—the observance of the mean is Temperance, the excess Profligacy. Men deficient in the enjoyment of pleasures scarcely occur, and hence this character also has not been assigned a name, but we may call it Insensible. In regard to giving and getting money, the observance of the mean is Liberality; the excess and deficiency are Prodigality and Meanness, and these exceed and fall short in opposite ways: the prodigal exceeds in giving and is deficient in getting, whereas the mean man exceeds in getting and is deficient in giving. For the present then we describe these qualities in outline and summarily, which is enough for the purpose in hand; but they will be more accurately defined later.

There are also other dispositions in relation to money, namely, the mode of observing the mean called Magnificence (the magnificent man being different from the liberal, as the former deals with large amounts and the latter with small ones), the excess called Tastelessness or Vulgarity, and the defect called Shabbiness. These are not the same as Liberality and the vices corresponding to it; but the way in which they differ will be discussed later.<sup>5</sup>

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Enough has now been said to show that moral virtue is a mean, and in what sense this is so, namely that it is a mean between two vices, one of excess and the other of defect; and that it is such a mean because it aims at hitting the middle point in feelings and in actions. This is why it is a hard task to be good, for it is hard to find the middle point in anything: for instance, not everybody can find the centre of

<sup>5</sup> Book II, Chapters VI, VII.

a circle, but only someone who knows geometry. So also anybody can become angry—that is easy, and so it is to give and spend money; but to be angry with or give money to the right person, and to the right amount, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way—this is not within everybody's power and is not easy; so that to do these things properly is rare, praiseworthy, and noble.

Hence the first rule in aiming at the mean is to avoid that extreme which is the more opposed to the mean, as Calypso advises—

Steer the ship clear of yonder spray and surge.

For of the two extremes one is a more serious error than the other. Hence, inasmuch as to hit the mean extremely well is difficult, the second best way to sail, as the saying goes, is to take the least of the evils; and the best way to do this is the way we enjoin.

The second rule is to notice what are the errors to which we are ourselves most prone (as different men are inclined by nature to different faults)—and we shall discover what these are by observing the pleasure or pain that we experience—then we must drag ourselves away in the opposite direction, for by steering wide of our besetting error we shall make a middle course. This is the method adopted by carpenters to straighten warped timber.

Thirdly, we must in everything be most of all on our guard against what is pleasant and against pleasure; for when pleasure is on her trial we are not impartial judges. The right course is therefore to feel towards pleasure as the elders of the people felt towards Helen, and to apply their words to her on every occasion; for if we roundly bid her be gone, we shall be less likely to err.

These then, to sum up the matter, are the precautions that will best enable us to hit the mean. But no doubt it is a difficult thing to do, and especially in particular cases: for

instance, it is not easy to define in what manner and with what people and on what sort of grounds and how long one ought to be angry; and in fact we sometimes praise men who err on the side of defect in this matter and call them gentle, sometimes those who are quick to anger and style them manly. However, though we do not blame one who diverges only a little from the right course, whether on the side of the too much or of the too little, we do blame one who diverges more widely, and to a noticeable extent. Yet to what degree and how seriously a man must err to be blamed is not easy to define on principle. For in fact no object of perception is easy to define; and such questions of degree depend on particular circumstances, and the decision lies with perception.

Thus much then is clear, that it is the middle disposition in each department of conduct that is to be praised, but that one should lean sometimes to the side of excess and sometimes to that of deficiency, since this is the easiest way of hitting the mean and the right course.<sup>6</sup>

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Now we stated that happiness is not a certain disposition of character; since if it were it might be possessed by a man who passed the whole of his life asleep, living the life of a vegetable, or by one who was plunged in the deepest misfortune. If then we reject this as unsatisfactory, and feel bound to class happiness rather as some form of activity, as has been said in the earlier part of this treatise, and if activities are of two kinds, some merely necessary means and desirable only for the sake of something else, others desirable in themselves, it is clear that happiness is to be classed among activities desirable in themselves, and not among those desirable as a means to something else; since happiness lacks nothing, and is self-sufficient.

<sup>6</sup> Book II, Chapter IX.

But those activities are desirable in themselves which do not aim at any result beyond the mere exercise of the activity. Now this is felt to be the nature of actions in conformity with virtue; for to do noble and virtuous deeds is a thing desirable for its own sake.

But agreeable amusements also are desirable for their own sake; we do not pursue them as a means to something else, for as a matter of fact they are more often harmful than beneficial, causing men to neglect their health and their estates. Yet persons whom the world counts happy usually have recourse to such pastimes; and this is why adepts in such pastime stand in high favour with princes, because they make themselves agreeable in supplying what their patrons desire: and what they want is amusement. So it is supposed that amusements are a component part of happiness, because princes and potentates devote their leisure to them.

But (i) perhaps princes and potentates are not good evidence. Virtue and intelligence, which are the sources of man's higher activities, do not depend on the possession of power; and if these persons, having no taste for pure and liberal pleasure, have recourse to the pleasures of the body, we must not on that account suppose that bodily pleasures are the more desirable. Children imagine that the things they themselves value are actually the best; it is not surprising therefore that, as children and grown men have different standards of value, so also should the worthless and the virtuous. Therefore, as has repeatedly been said, those things are actually valuable and pleasant which appear so to the good man; but each man thinks that activity most desirable which suits his particular disposition, and therefore the good man thinks virtuous activity most desirable. It follows therefore that happiness is not to be found in amusements.

(ii) Indeed it would be strange that amusement should



be our End—that we should toil and moil all our life long in order that we may amuse ourselves. For virtually every object we adopt is pursued as a means to something else, excepting happiness, which is an end in itself; to make amusement the object of our serious pursuits and our work seems foolish and childish to excess: Anacharsis's motto, Play in order that you may work, is felt to be the right rule. For amusement is a form of rest; but we need rest because we are not able to go on working without a break, and therefore it is not an end, since we take it as a means to further activity.

(iii) And the life that conforms with virtue is thought to be a happy life; but virtuous life involves serious purpose, and does not consist in amusement.

(iv) Also we pronounce serious things to be superior to things that are funny and amusing; and the nobler a faculty or a person is, the more serious, we think, are their activities; therefore, the activity of the nobler faculty or person is itself superior, and therefore more productive of happiness.

(v) Also anybody can enjoy the pleasures of the body, a slave no less than the noblest of mankind; but no one allows a slave any measure of happiness, any more than a life of his own. Therefore happiness does not consist in pastimes and amusements, but in activities in accordance with virtue, as has been said already.

But if happiness consists in activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be activity in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be the virtue of the best part of us. Whether then this be the intellect, or whatever else it be that is thought to rule and lead us by nature, and to have cognizance of what is noble and divine, either as being itself also actually divine, or as being relatively the divinest part of us, it is the activity of this part of us in

accordance with the virtue proper to it that will constitute perfect happiness; and it has been stated already that this activity is the activity of contemplation.

And that happiness consists in contemplation may be accepted as agreeing both with the results already reached and with the truth. For contemplation is at once the highest form of activity, since the intellect is the highest thing in us, and the objects with which the intellect deals are the highest things that can be known; and also it is the most continuous, for we can reflect more continuously than we can carry on any form of action. And again we suppose that happiness must contain an element of pleasure; now activity in accordance with wisdom is admittedly the most pleasant of the activities in accordance with virtue: at all events it is held that philosophy or the pursuit of wisdom contains pleasures of marvellous purity and permanence, and it is reasonable to suppose that the enjoyment of knowledge is a still pleasanter occupation than the pursuit of it. Also the activity of contemplation will be found to possess in the highest degree the quality that is termed self-sufficiency: for while it is true that the wise man equally with the just man and the rest requires the necessities of life, yet, these being adequately supplied, whereas the just man needs other persons towards whom or with whose aid he may act justly, and so likewise do the temperate man and the brave man and the others, the wise man on the contrary can also contemplate by himself, and the more so the wiser he is; no doubt he will study better with the aid of fellow-workers, but still he is the most self-sufficient of men. Also the activity of contemplation may be held to be the only activity that is loved for its own sake: it produces no result beyond the actual act of contemplation, whereas from practical pursuits we look to secure some advantage, greater or smaller, beyond the action itself. Also happiness is thought to involve leisure; for we do business in order that we may have

leisure, and carry on war in order that we may have peace. Now the practical virtues are exercised in politics or in warfare; but the pursuits of politics and war seem to be unleisured—those of war indeed entirely so, for no one desires to be at war for the sake of being at war, nor deliberately takes steps to cause a war: a man would be thought an utterly blood-thirsty character if he declared war on a friendly state for the sake of causing battles and massacres. But the activity of the politician also is unleisured, and aims at securing something beyond the mere participation in politics—positions of authority and honour, or, if the happiness of the politician himself and of his fellow-citizens, this happiness conceived as something distinct from political activity (and in fact we are investigating it as so distinct). If then among practical pursuits displaying the virtues, politics and war stand out pre-eminent in nobility and grandeur, and yet they are unleisured, and directed to some further end, not chosen for their own sakes: whereas the activity of the intellect is felt to excel in serious worth, consisting as it does in contemplation, and to aim at no end beyond itself, and also to contain a pleasure peculiar to itself, and therefore augmenting its activity: and if accordingly the attributes of this activity are found to be self-sufficiency, leisuredness, such freedom from fatigue as is possible for man, and all the other attributes of blessedness: it follows that it is the activity of the intellect that constitutes complete human happiness—provided it be granted a complete span of life, for nothing that belongs to happiness can be incomplete.

Such a life as this however will be higher than the human level: not in virtue of his humanity will a man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him that is divine; and by as much as this something is superior to his composite nature, by so much is its activity superior to the exercise of the other forms of virtue. If then the intellect is something divine in comparison with man, so is the life of the in-

tellekt divine in comparison with human life. Nor ought we to obey those who enjoin that a man should have man's thoughts and a mortal the thoughts of mortality, but we ought so far as possible to achieve immortality, and do all that man may to live in accordance with the highest thing in him; for though this be small in bulk, in power and value it far surpasses all the rest.

It may even be held that this is the true self of each, inasmuch as it is the ruling and better part; and therefore it would be a strange thing if a man should choose to live not his own life but the life of some other than himself.

Moreover what was said before will apply here also: that which is best and most pleasant for each creature is that which is proper to the nature of each; accordingly the life of the intellect is the best and the pleasantest life for man, inasmuch as the intellect especially is man; therefore this life will be the happiest.

The life of moral virtue, on the other hand, is happy only in a secondary degree. For the moral activities are purely human: Justice, I mean, Courage and the other virtues we display in our intercourse with our fellows, when we observe what is due to each in contracts and services and in our various actions, and in our emotions also; and all of these things seem to be purely human affairs. And some moral qualities are thought to be the outcome of the physical constitution, and moral virtue is thought to have a close affinity in many respects with the passions. Moreover, Prudence is intimately connected with Moral Virtue, and this with Prudence, inasmuch as the first principles which Prudence employs are determined by the Moral Virtues, and the right standard for the Moral Virtues is determined by Prudence. But these being also connected with the passions are related to our composite nature; now the virtues of our composite nature are purely human; so therefore also is the life that manifests these virtues, and the happiness that belongs to

it. Whereas the happiness that belongs to the intellect is separate: so much may be said about it here, for a full discussion of the matter is beyond the scope of our present purpose. And such happiness would appear to need but little external equipment, or less than the happiness based on moral virtue. Both, it may be granted, require the mere necessities of life, and that in an equal degree (though the politician does as a matter of fact take more trouble about bodily requirements and so forth than the philosopher); for in this respect there may be little difference between them. But for the purpose of their special activities their requirements will differ widely. The liberal man will need wealth in order to do liberal actions, and so indeed will the just man in order to discharge his obligations (since mere intentions are invisible, and even the unjust pretend to wish to act justly); and the brave man will need strength if he is to perform any action displaying his virtue; and the temperate man opportunity for indulgence: otherwise how can he, or the possessor of any other virtue, show that he is virtuous? It is disputed also whether purpose or performance is the more important factor in virtue, as it is alleged to depend on both; now the perfection of virtue will clearly consist in both; but the performance of virtuous actions requires much outward equipment, and the more so the greater and more noble the actions are. But the student, so far as the pursuit of his activity is concerned, needs no external apparatus: on the contrary, worldly goods may almost be said to be a hindrance to contemplation; though it is true that, being a man and living in the society of others, he chooses to engage in virtuous action, and so will need external goods to carry on his life as a human being.

The following considerations also will show that perfect happiness is some form of contemplative activity. The gods, as we conceive them, enjoy supreme felicity and happiness. But what sort of actions can we attribute to them?

Just actions? but will it not seem ridiculous to think of them as making contracts, restoring deposits and the like? Then brave actions—enduring terrors and running risks for the nobility of so doing? Or liberal actions? but to whom will they give? Besides, it would be absurd to suppose that they actually have a coinage or currency of some sort! And temperate actions—what will these mean in their case? surely it would be derogatory to praise them for not having evil desires! If we go through the list we shall find that all forms of virtuous conduct seem trifling and unworthy of the gods. Yet nevertheless they have always been conceived as, at all events, living, and therefore living actively, for we cannot suppose they are always asleep like Endymion. But for a living being, if we eliminate action, and a fortiori creative action, what remains save contemplation? It follows that the activity of God, which is transcendent in blessedness, is the activity of contemplation; and therefore among human activities that which is most akin to the divine activity of contemplation will be the greatest source of happiness.

A further confirmation is that the lower animals cannot partake of happiness, because they are completely devoid of the contemplative activity. The whole of the life of the gods is blessed, and that of man is so in so far as it contains some likeness to the divine activity; but none of the other animals possess happiness, because they are entirely incapable of contemplation. Happiness therefore is co-extensive in its range with contemplation: the more a class of beings possesses the faculty of contemplation, the more it enjoys happiness, not as an accidental concomitant of contemplation but as inherent in it, since contemplation is valuable in itself. It follows that happiness is some form of contemplation.

But the philosopher being a man will also need external well-being, since man's nature is not self-sufficient for the activity of contemplation, but he must also have bodily

health and a supply of food and other requirements. Yet if supreme blessedness is not possible without external goods, it must not be supposed that happiness will demand many or great possessions; for self-sufficiency does not depend on excessive abundance, nor does moral conduct, and it is possible to perform noble deeds even without being ruler of land or sea: one can do virtuous acts with quite moderate resources. This may be clearly observed in experience: private citizens do not seem to be less but more given to doing virtuous actions than princes and potentates. It is sufficient then if moderate resources are forthcoming; for a life of virtuous activity will be essentially a happy life.

Solon also doubtless gave a good description of happiness, when he said that in his opinion those men were happy who, being moderately equipped with external goods, had performed noble exploits and had lived temperately; for it is possible for a man of but moderate possessions to do what is right. Anaxagoras again does not seem to have conceived the happy man as rich or powerful, since he says that he would not be surprised if his notion of happiness were to appear strange in the eyes of the many; for most men judge by externals, which are all that they can perceive. So our theories seem to be in agreement with the opinions of the wise.

Such arguments then carry some degree of conviction; but it is by the practical experience of life and conduct that the truth is really tested, since it is there that the final decision lies. We must therefore examine the conclusions we have advanced by bringing them to the test of the facts of life. If they are in harmony with the facts, we may accept them; if found to disagree, we must deem them mere theories.

And it seems likely that the man who pursues intellectual activity, and who cherishes his intellect and keeps that in the best condition, is also the man most beloved of the gods.

For if, as is generally believed, the gods exercise some superintendence over human affairs, then it will be reasonable to suppose that they take pleasure in that part of man which is best and most akin to themselves, namely the intellect, and that they recompense with their favours those men who esteem and honour this most, because these care for the things dear to themselves, and act rightly and nobly. Now it is clear that all these attributes belong most of all to the wise man. He therefore is most beloved by the gods; and if so, he is naturally most happy.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Book X, Chapters VI-VIII.



## CHAPTER V

### EPICUREANISM

WHEN Socrates was put to death, his colleagues separated. Looking back on them now, Plato, and Aristotle in the next generation, are so overwhelmingly important, that we tend to forget the minor schools. And yet two of these were destined to give birth to schools which in the Hellenistic and Roman periods completely overshadowed the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

Socrates, as we learn especially in Xenophon, was deeply earnest in trying to live the best life. And yet, because virtue is knowledge, and because the only knowledge common to the various virtues is a pleasure calculus, he identified good and pleasure. Aristippus, founding the Cyrenaic school, emphasized and distorted this element in Socrates' teaching. To him immediate sense-pleasure was the highest good. Of no other school is the maxim so characteristic, "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." We are entirely limited to our present sensations, and nothing else matters.

But Socrates on the whole lived a remarkably simple life. While he occasionally indulged in banquets, he never got drunk and always maintained the ability to suffer hardship. In the wars he acquitted himself nobly and, until he began pestering Athens with his annoying questions, his physical and moral courage won for him general admiration. Antisthenes, the Cynic, followed Socrates' example rather than his precept. Pleasure and luxury and even the polite conventions of society are vices. Virtue, understood as a life of hard labor and self-control, is the only good.

The school Antisthenes founded finally degenerated into a group of beggars, proper subjects for the satires of Lucian, and yet not before Lucian himself realized that there is in them much to be commended. Even though they lacked a system with sufficient positive content to insure its permanent value, their lives were a salutary reproach to the loose morality of their contemporaries. And before passing from the scene of philosophic activity they had produced moral giants whom posterity ever admired. The best known perhaps is the picturesque Diogenes whose preference for sunlight to Alexander the Great has been so frequently repeated. Typical, also, was his remark about the house of a gourmand which was up for sale; "being so filled with debauchery," he said, "no wonder you vomit your owner." It is undeniable that both the Cynics and the Cyrenaics were extreme. Their importance lies in their giving rise to two really great schools, Stoicism and Epicureanism respectively.

Shortly before 300 B. C. Epicurus founded in Athens a school which for more than five hundred years remained true to his principles. More adequately to appreciate the long history of these ancient schools, we can note that the University of Pennsylvania—one of the very few colleges organized before the Revolution—has not yet completed two hundred years. And even Oxford is short of the record of Plato's Academy. Another point of passing interest is the prominence of open air instruction in antiquity. Whereas today we teach in class rooms almost exclusively, Aristotle used a grove of trees and Epicurus a garden.

To promote happiness, according to Epicurus, is the sole aim of philosophy. Mathematics, logic, and cultural subjects in general, he somewhat despised. Natural science, since it liberates us from superstition, is more useful. But the study of ethics is man's most important occupation. The minimum of logic, which even the Epicureans required for

the study of ethics, may be safely omitted here. The main points of their physics, however, should be kept in mind. The purpose of this science is to teach us that no divine providence governs the world. We learn that the gods—and there are gods strange to say—care nothing for man; they neither reward nor punish him. This lesson relieves us of superstitious fears. Further than that, physics is not to be pursued. The various possible hypotheses are all good, except the one which affirms God's care. Detailed problems, such as, whether the same sun rises every morning or every day has a new sun; why the moon waxes and wanes, concerning which there were many theories current; whether the moon shines with a borrowed light or with its own; all these detailed problems are not worth bothering about. Physics is to free us from superstition, and that is sufficient. It succeeds by assuming that nothing exists but matter in purposeless motion. We do not have a tongue in order to speak; it just happens we have a tongue and by accident we can speak. The atoms of matter, which in moving accidentally form men and things, do not always obey fixed laws. Every once in a while, an atom happens to jump out of its course. This peculiarity, which is called chance, or an uncaused declination, is the reason that man, a composite of such atoms, is free from mechanical law. And of all the concepts which in the history of ethics have been thought essential to man's responsibility and hence to morality itself, none has been more emphasized and abused than freedom. Stoicism, as we shall see, takes quite an opposite attitude on this question.

Man's aim is to live happily, and for Epicurus happiness means pleasure. His improvement upon the Cyrenaics consists in his including, first, mental as well as sensual pleasures, second, future as well as present pleasures, and, third, negative rather than positive pleasures. First, contentment of mind, freedom from anxiety, is of greater value than the

elaborate feasts which so delighted Aristippus. And this harmonizes with the second point, because sense-pleasures bring pain, but contentment never does. Regard for the future is so important in this system that prudence is the highest virtue. And insistence on prudence leads us to conceptions one little expects in egoistic hedonism. To prevent mutual harm, Epicurus will be perfectly just, and even secret injustice is to be avoided on account of the anxiety it entails. The same reasoning leads one to a high estimate of friendship. Indeed an Epicurean will even die for a friend. This, as the student will notice when he reads Epicurus' paragraphs on death, is inconsistent with his system. Epicurus, however, is not noted for either profundity or originality, and it is his influence on so many men rather than his reasoning ability which has established his fame. The inconsistency of dying for a friend is the more evident when we hear he would not become a father, nor enter politics because of the inconveniences involved.

The third point was his choice of negative rather than positive pleasures. Intense sense-pleasures are a strain. They involve future pain and require, in many cases, increased stimulation. If one draw a curve crossing and recrossing a horizontal line, the high peaks, representing intense positive pleasure, are followed by deep troughs of pain. A small strip lying just above the line will stand for negative pleasure. Man's best life, then, can be represented by a slightly wavy line hovering just above the horizontal. This schematization may not be entirely adequate or exact. By intensity of pleasure one is not to understand a greatness in amount. Corn and water and simple fare give the most extreme pleasure when anyone needs them, but we do not ordinarily call a plain meal an intense pleasure. Pleasure, for the Epicureans, seems to be nothing more than the complete absence of pain or rather this is the greatest amount of pleasure

possible. When once all pain is removed, the pleasure may vary but can never be increased.

Thus it will be seen that the term "Epicurean" applied opprobriously is an unhistorical usage. Whenever today we condemn indulgence in food and drink, we may say Epicurean, but we mean Cyrenaic.

### EPICURUS<sup>1</sup>

Epicurus to Menoeceus, greeting.

Let no one be slow to seek wisdom when he is young nor weary in the search thereof when he is grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more. Therefore, both old and young ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed toward attaining it.

Those things which without ceasing I have declared unto thee, those do, and exercise thyself therein, holding them to be the elements of right life. First believe that God is a living being immortal and blessed, according to the notion of a god indicated by the common sense of mankind; and so believing, thou shalt not affirm of him aught that is foreign to his immortality or that agrees not with blessed-

<sup>1</sup> Diogenes Laertius, Hicks' translation.

ness, but shalt believe about him whatever may uphold both his blessedness and his immortality. For verily there are gods, and the knowledge of them is manifest; but they are not such as the multitude believe, seeing that men do not steadfastly maintain the notions they form respecting them. Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them is truly impious. For the utterances of the multitude about the gods are not true preconceptions but false assumptions; hence it is that the greatest evils happen to the wicked and the greatest blessings happen to the good from the hand of the gods, seeing that they are always favourable to their own good qualities and take pleasure in men like unto themselves, but reject as alien whatever is not of their kind.

Accustom thyself to believe that death is nothing to us, for good and evil imply sentience, and death is the privation of all sentience; therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by adding to life an illimitable time, but by taking away the yearning after immortality. For life has no terrors for him who has thoroughly apprehended that there are no terrors for him in ceasing to live. Foolish, therefore, is the man who says that he fears death, not because it will pain when it comes, but because it pains in the prospect. Whatsoever causes no annoyance when it is present, causes only a groundless pain in the expectation. Death, therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not. It is nothing, then, either to the living or to the dead, for with the living it is not and the dead exist no longer. But in the world, at one time men shun death as the greatest of all evils, and at another time choose it as a respite from the evils in life. The wise man does not deprecate life nor does he fear the cessation of life. The thought of life is no of-

fence to him, nor is the cessation of life regarded as an evil. And even as men choose of food not merely and simply the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so the wise seek to enjoy the time which is most pleasant and not merely that which is longest. And he who admonishes the young to live well and the old to make a good end speaks foolishly, not merely because of the desirableness of life, but because the same exercise at once teaches to live well and to die well. Much worse is he who says that it were good not to be born, but when once one is born to pass with all speed through the gates of Hades. For if he truly believes this, why does he not depart from life? It were easy for him to do so, if once he were firmly convinced. If he speaks only in mockery, his words are foolishness, for those who hear believe him not.

We must remember that the future is neither wholly ours nor wholly not ours, so that neither must we count upon it as quite certain to come nor despair of it as quite certain not to come.

We must also reflect that of desires some are natural, others are groundless; and that of the natural some are necessary as well as natural, and some natural only. And of the necessary desires some are necessary if we are to be happy, some if the body is to be rid of uneasiness, some if we are even to live. He who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquillity of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life. For the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid; seeing that the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking, nor to look for anything else by which the good of the soul and of the body will be fulfilled. When we are pained because of the absence of pleasure, then, and then only, do we feel the need of pleas-

ure. Wherefore we call pleasure the alpha and omega of a blessed life. Pleasure is our first and kindred good. It is the starting-point of every choice and of every aversion, and to it we come back, inasmuch as we make feeling the rule by which to judge of every good thing. And since pleasure is our first and native good, for that reason we do not choose every pleasure whatsoever, but oftentimes pass over many pleasures when a greater annoyance ensues from them. And oftentimes we consider pains superior to pleasures when submission to the pains for a long time brings us as a consequence a greater pleasure. While therefore all pleasure because it is naturally akin to us is good, not all pleasure is choice worthy, just as all pain is an evil and yet not all pain is to be shunned. It is, however, by measuring one against another, and by looking at the conveniences and inconveniences, that all these matters must be judged. Sometimes we treat the good as an evil, and the evil, on the contrary, as a good. Again, we regard independence of outward things as a great good, not so as in all cases to use little, but so as to be contented with little if we have not much, being honestly persuaded that they have the sweetest enjoyment of luxury who stand least in need of it, and that whatever is natural is easily procured and only the vain and worthless hard to win. Plain fare gives as much pleasure as a costly diet, when once the pain of want has been removed, while bread and water confer the highest possible pleasure when they are brought to hungry lips. To habituate one's self, therefore, to simple and inexpensive diet supplies all that is needful for health, and enables a man to meet the necessary requirements of life without shrinking, and it places us in a better condition when we approach at intervals a costly fare and renders us fearless of fortune.

When we say, then, that pleasure is the end and aim, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the pleasures of sensuality, as we are understood to do by some



through ignorance, prejudice, or wilful misrepresentation. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul. It is not an unbroken succession of drinking-bouts and of revelry, not sexual love, not the enjoyment of the fish and other delicacies of a luxurious table, which produce a pleasant life; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the greatest tumults take possession of the soul. Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy; from it spring all the other virtues, for it teaches that we cannot lead a life of pleasure which is not also a life of prudence, honour, and justice; nor lead a life of prudence, honour, and justice, which is not also a life of pleasure. For the virtues have grown into one with a pleasant life, and a pleasant life is inseparable from them.

Who, then, is superior in thy judgement to such a man? He holds a holy belief concerning the gods, and is altogether free from the fear of death. He has diligently considered the end fixed by nature, and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how either the duration or the intensity of evils is but slight. Destiny, which some introduce as sovereign over all things, he laughs to scorn, affirming rather that some things happen of necessity, others by chance, others through our own agency. For he sees that necessity destroys responsibility and that chance or fortune is inconstant; whereas our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame naturally attach. It were better, indeed, to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath that yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed. The one holds out some faint hope that we may escape if we honour the gods, while the necessity of the naturalists is deaf to all entreaties. Nor does he hold chance to be a god, as the world in general does, for in

the acts of a god there is no disorder; nor to be a cause, though an uncertain one, for he believes that no good or evil is dispensed by chance to men so as to make life blessed, though it supplies the starting-point of great good and great evil. He believes that the misfortune of the wise is better than the prosperity of the fool. It is better, in short, that what is well judged in action should not owe its successful issue to the aid of chance.

Exercise thyself in these and kindred precepts day and night, both by thyself and with him who is like unto thee; then never, either in waking or in dream, wilt thou be disturbed, but wilt live as a god among men. For man loses all semblance of mortality by living in the midst of immortal blessings.

## PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES <sup>2</sup>

### THE FOUR-FOLD REMEDY

#### (TETRAPHARMAKOS)

I. The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favour. For all such things exist only in the weak.

II. Death is nothing to us: for that which is dissolved is without sensation; and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us.

III. The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body nor of mind, nor of both at once.

IV. Pain does not last continuously in the flesh, but the acutest pain is there for a very short time and even that which just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh does not continue

<sup>2</sup> From *Epicurus*, translated by Cyril Bailey, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1926.

for many days at once. But chronic illnesses permit a predominance of pleasure over pain in the flesh.

#### THE NATURE OF PLEASURE

VIII. No pleasure is a bad thing in itself: but the means which produce some pleasures bring with them disturbances many times greater than the pleasures.

IX. If every pleasure could be intensified so that it lasted and influenced the whole organism or the most essential parts of our nature, pleasures could never differ from one another.

X. If the things that produce the pleasures of profligates could dispel the fears of the mind about the phenomena of the sky and death and its pains, and also teach the limits of desires and of pains, we should never have cause to blame them: for they would be filling themselves full with pleasures from every source and never have pain of body or mind, which is the evil of life.

XVIII. The pleasure in the flesh is not increased, when once the pain due to want is removed, but is only varied: and the limit as regards pleasure in the mind is begotten by the reasoned understanding of these very pleasures and of the emotions akin to them, which used to cause the greatest fear to the mind.

XIX. Infinite time contains no greater pleasure than limited time, if one measures by reason the limits of pleasure.

XX. The flesh perceives the limits of pleasure as unlimited and unlimited time is required to supply it. But the mind, having attained a reasoned understanding of the ultimate good of the flesh and its limits and having dissipated the fears concerning the time to come, supplies us with the complete life, and we have no further need of infinite time: but neither does the mind shun pleasure, nor, when circumstances begin to bring about the departure from life, does it ap-

proach its end as though it fell short in any way of the best life.

XXI. He who has learned the limits of life knows that that which removes the pain due to want and makes the whole of life complete is easy to obtain; so that there is no need of actions which involve competition.

### JUSTICE

XXXI. The justice which arises from nature is a pledge of mutual advantage to restrain men from harming one another and save them from being harmed.

XXXII. For all living things which have not been able to make compacts not to harm one another or be harmed, nothing ever is just or unjust; and likewise too for all tribes of men which have been unable or unwilling to make compacts not to harm or be harmed.

XXXIII. Justice never is anything in itself, but in the dealings of men with one another in any place whatever and at any time. It is a kind of compact not to harm or be harmed.

XXXIV. Injustice is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which attaches to the apprehension of being unable to escape those appointed to punish such actions.

XXXV. It is not possible for one who acts in secret contravention of the terms of the compact not to harm or be harmed, to be confident that he will escape detection, even if at present he escapes a thousand times. For up to the time of death it cannot be certain that he will indeed escape.

XXXVI. In its general aspect justice is the same for all for it is a kind of mutual advantage in the dealings of men with one another: but with reference to the individual peculiarities of a country or any other circumstances the same thing does not turn out to be just for all.

XXXVII. Among actions which are sanctioned as just

by law, that which is proved on examination to be of advantage in the requirements of men's dealings with one another, has the guarantee of justice, whether it is the same for all or not. But if a man makes a law and it does not turn out to lead to advantage in men's dealings with each other, then it no longer has the essential nature of justice. And even if the advantage in the matter of justice shifts from one side to the other, but for a while accords with the general concept, it is none the less just for that period in the eyes of those who do not confound themselves with empty sounds but look to the actual facts.

XXXVIII. Where, provided the circumstances have not been altered, actions which were considered just, have been shown not to accord with the general concept in actual practice, then they are not just. But where, when circumstances have changed, the same actions which were sanctioned as just no longer lead to advantage, there they were just at the time when they were of advantage for the dealings of fellow-citizens with one another; but subsequently they are no longer just, when no longer of advantage.

## CHAPTER VI

### STOICISM

THE turning of a few pages in a text book hardly suffices to indicate the passing of a century with its changes. In governmental affairs Plato's ideal republic had succumbed to the principles of Callicles, in philosophy, drama, and art Athen's glory was gone forever. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle; Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; Polygnotus, Phidias and Praxiteles, were geniuses without successors. Those who did succeed were not Athenians, nor were they geniuses; but they founded schools of wide-spread influence. We have finished with one.

And now, before the men of Athens stands a Semite teaching a new doctrine, which, in some respects, was reëchoed by another Semite three hundred years later as he spoke to the school the former had founded, saying: "God . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needeth anything, seeing he giveth to all, life and breath and all things, . . . for in him we live and move and have our being." Where these immortal words were proclaimed to some who listened and to some who laughed, there stood three centuries previously, Zeno (342-270 B. C.), the founder of Stoicism.

Forced by shipwreck to land in Athens, this son of a Phœnician merchant was first attracted to the rigorous morality of the Cynics. And though their crudities finally repelled him, their self-control left an eternal mark on his soul. Zeno then studied with all the leading teachers and eventually launched his own program, Stoicism. His successor, Cleanthes, head of the Stoa (264-232 B. C.), being more capable in literature than in philosophy, nearly ruined

the school, though his fine qualities won the personal admiration of great numbers. After him, Chrysippus vigorously reestablished Zeno's work, (232–206 B. C.), systematized the doctrine, and left Stoicism a powerful institution. For more than four centuries Stoic influence not only molded the philosophies and consciences of men, but in Cicero and Marcus Aurelius directed the affairs of an empire as well.

Epicurean philosophy remained always the same; Stoicism shows change and development and may for elementary purposes be divided into a Greek and a Roman period. In both periods the Stoics were called upon to resist social degeneration, to convert Callicles or Catiline to the principles of clean living and honest government. *The Last Days of Pompeii* by Edward Bulwer (Lord) Lytton, and Sienkiewicz' *Quo Vadis*, novels of tremendous interest, vividly depict the pitiable depth to which society had sunk. To the Stoics was apportioned the task of struggling vainly against this degradation, the task of replacing external luxury and internal turmoil by external simplicity and inward peace. Since the Cynics failed because they neglected the intellectual issues involved, the Stoics made it an integral part of their program to formulate a complete philosophy which would serve as the basis of moral life. In opposition to Aristotle, who considered knowledge as an end in itself and put morality in an inferior position, both Epicureans and Stoics pursued knowledge solely as a means of virtue. The Epicureans, however, despised much learning as irrelevant. But the Stoics, while giving ethics the chief place, held logic and physics in high regard. And after developing, in the Greek period, a system of epistemology and physics, Roman Stoicism stressed ethics even more.

As a theory of physics the Stoics taught an apparently inconsistent materialism, for while nothing is real which does not occupy space, yet matter by itself is motionless and

formless. Inseparably joined with matter is an active molding principle which rationally directs the events of the world. These two seem to become completely identified at the beginning and end of the world cycle. In a general conflagration the heavens pass away and the elements melt with a fervent heat, and only fire remains. This fire, the fundamental stuff of the universe, is the rational, conscious, molding principle and very God. So we see that originally the Stoic doctrine was a form of pantheism. As the school developed, however, a theistic trend left strict pantheism rather in the background.<sup>1</sup>

Since this divine reason or fire penetrates all matter, every event depends on its activity. The law so illustrated is called Fate or Destiny, an endless chain of causation. In later times in harmony with the theistic tendency, it was called Providence, but in any case the Stoics take issue with the indeterministic Epicurean system. No atom can jump out of its appointed course, all things must fulfill God's plan. The Stoics took good care to reply in detail to every argument against Providence. God is perfect, he rules over all; since he knows the future, the future is certain. To suppose that either of two future events is equally possible is equivalent to saying that something can happen without an adequate cause, and this would destroy the unity of the universe.

The soul of man, corporeal as everything is, consists of fiery breath akin to the universal fire. It is divided into eight parts, the five senses, the powers of reproduction and of speech and of the will. This latter, which combines intellect and volition, is the dominant part, the only true soul in the strict sense and the seat of personal identity. Volition rather than intellection is man's chief characteristic. Indeed judgment itself depends on the will. Our convictions are in our power just as truly as our actions and we are responsible

<sup>1</sup> Sen. Ep. 10. Epic. I IX. The expressions are vague and can be forced to conform with pantheism, but their tone is more harmonious with a theistic world-view.



for both. Yet if all events are determined from all eternity including the decisions of the will, how can man be responsible for what he does? Does it not seem strange that the school which most insists on rigid determinism should be the ethical school par excellence of antiquity? How a man can be held responsible for an act which by necessity he must do may at first seem a difficult problem; yet we find the Stoics even condemning most men. The Stoics do not completely solve this problem, although it can be done by showing that responsibility is independent of freedom. The Stoics do, however, point the way to a solution. Man in a very special sense is his will; the decision of the will makes an act one's own. We are responsible for what proceeds from our will, for such an act is our act, and whether we might have acted otherwise or not is irrelevant.

This background of physics and psychology is sufficient as an introduction to their ethics proper. Since the universe is governed by a beneficent providence, the ideal life is one "according to nature." The attempt to give precise significance to this phrase constitutes a good part of Stoic history. Its most satisfactory interpretation is a life "according to reason." For reason is that characteristic of man which most closely links him with the principle of the universe. Since, as we have seen, intellect and will are completely unified in Stoicism, a life according to reason would limit the number of our desires, most of which are quite foolish, and free us from irrational emotion. How this brings happiness within our grasp is shown in the selection from Epictetus on *Things in Our Power*.

The advice to live rationally, however, will not be very concrete until the Stoics tell us what actions reason bids us do. Does it command a search for pleasure? On this point the Stoics are decidedly antagonistic to the Epicureans. They maintained that the Epicureans used the word pleasure ambiguously and thus dodged many real objections to their

theory. But if it is strictly limited to sense-pleasure, as it should be if anything definite is meant, the Stoics reject the assumption that pain and pleasure are commensurable, which, since it is essential to Hedonism, should be recalled when Jeremy Bentham is studied. Sense-pleasure is not a good at all, but, physiologically, is a sign of decay in the sensing organ. Besides, pleasure being irrational cannot be according to reason which prescribes, the Stoics strenuously insist, a life of virtue.

Even apart from pleasure, virtue is sufficient for happiness, for though we do not escape pain thereby, we do become superior to it. Virtue is not the external act but the volition from which the act proceeds. It is strength of will and moral insight and therefore in our power. Health and wealth are beyond our control, but even though we cannot control circumstances, we can control our reaction to them. This self-control must be exercised not only with regard to pleasure but all emotions. The Stoics had identified intellect and will, they had denied Aristotle's distinction between intellectual and moral virtues and had insisted on the unity of the soul; hence, on this basis, emotion becomes not a sometimes dangerous though altogether natural part of us to be kept under control, but a perversion of reason itself to be entirely eradicated. This develops the paradox that while the Stoics were the kindest, most cosmopolitan men of the time, regarding all men as brothers irrespective of race, nationality, and condition, and, contrary to their predecessors the Cynics, were quite sociably inclined, yet they condemned as irrational emotion that love and pity which brought the troubles of others to one's own heart. The truly wise man, hypostatized in the Stoic Sage, eliminates all emotion from life. And when this is accomplished he is not merely a good man but totally virtuous and absolutely perfect.

Need one insist that the Stoic Sage is a most extraordinary person? And the great gulf fixed between him and common

folk is more terrifying when we are told that there are no degrees in virtue. One man cannot be more virtuous than another; either he is virtuous or he is not and there is no middle ground. A man may drown in two inches of water as completely as in two fathoms, so a man with one vice is just as vicious as a man with many. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Mankind is divided into two classes only, the absolutely wise and the absolutely foolish. And with the very infrequent exceptions of men like Socrates and Diogenes all are wicked, cowardly and avaricious. (Seneca.)

Since virtue and vice are so separated there is no such thing as a gradual passage from the latter to the former. Of two blind men one may receive his sight tomorrow and the other never, but at present one is as blind as the other. Of two vicious men one may be perfect tomorrow, but he is altogether vicious now. The actual passage from one state to the other is not a process but an instantaneous conversion. This rigorous doctrine was however to some extent modified as time went on. Later Stoics began to admit degrees of virtue for the ordinary man and retained the Sage more as an ideal than as a reality. They introduced among the things which are neither good nor bad but indifferent the distinction of preferable and not preferable; so that while health and wealth were not good in the sense virtue is, yet they are better than sickness and poverty. But how consistent these Roman modifications were with the original Greek theory is a matter of private interpretation.

## ZENO<sup>2</sup>

This is why Zeno was the first (in his treatise *On the Nature of Man*) to designate as the end "life in agreement

<sup>2</sup> From *Diogenes Laertius*, Hicks' translation in the Loeb Library.

with nature" (or living agreeably to nature), which is the same as a virtuous life, virtue being the goal towards which nature guides us. So too Cleanthes in his treatise *On Pleasure*, as also Posidonius, and Hecato in his work *On Ends*. Again, living virtuously is equivalent to living in accordance with experience of the actual course of nature, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his *De finibus*; for our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe. And this is why the end may be defined as life in accordance with nature, or, in other words, in accordance with our own human nature as well as that of the universe, a life in which we refrain from every action forbidden by the law common to all things, that is to say, the right reason which pervades all things, and is identical with this Zeus, lord and ruler of all that is. And this very thing constitutes the virtue of the happy man and the smooth current of life, when all actions promote the harmony of the spirit dwelling in the individual man with the will of him who orders the universe. Diogenes then expressly declares the end to be to act with good reason in the selection of what is natural. Archedemus says the end is to live in the performance of all befitting actions.

By the nature with which our life ought to be in accord, Chrysippus understands both universal nature and more particularly the nature of man, whereas Cleanthes takes the nature of the universe alone as that which should be followed, without adding the nature of the individual.

And virtue, he holds, is a harmonious disposition, choice-worthy for its own sake and not from hope or fear or any external motive. Moreover, it is in virtue that happiness consists; for virtue is the state of mind which tends to make the whole of life harmonious. When a rational being is perverted, this is due to the deceptiveness of external pursuits or sometimes to the influence of associates. For the starting-points of nature are never perverse (pp. 195-197).

They hold that all goods are equal and that all good is desirable in the highest degree and admits of no lowering or heightening of intensity. Of things that are, some, they say, are good, some are evil, and some neither good nor evil (that is, morally indifferent).

Goods comprise the virtues of prudence, justice, courage, temperance, and the rest; while the opposites of these are evils, namely, folly, injustice, and the rest. Neutral (neither good nor evil, that is) are all those things which neither benefit nor harm a man: such as life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, fair fame and noble birth, and their opposites, death, disease, pain, ugliness, weakness, poverty, ignominy, low birth, and the like. This Hecato affirms in his *De fine*, book vii, and also Apollodorus in his *Ethics*, and Chrysippus. For, say they, such things (as life, health, and pleasure) are not in themselves goods, but are morally indifferent, though falling under the species or subdivision "things preferred" (pp. 207-209).

The term "indifferent" has two meanings: in the first it denotes the things which do not contribute either to happiness or to misery, as wealth, fame, health, strength, and the like; for it is possible to be happy without having these, although, if they are used in a certain way, such use of them tends to happiness or misery. In quite another sense those things are said to be indifferent which are without the power of stirring inclination or aversion; *e. g.* the fact that the number of hairs on one's head is odd or even or whether you hold out your finger straight or bent. But it was not in this sense that the things mentioned above were termed indifferent, they being quite capable of exciting inclination or aversion. Hence of these latter some are taken by preference, others are rejected, whereas indifference in the other sense affords no ground for either choosing or avoiding (pp. 209-211).

Now they say that the wise man is passionless, because

he is not prone to fall into such infirmity. But they add that in another sense the term apathy is applied to the bad man, when, that is, it means that he is callous and relentless. Further, the wise man is said to be free from vanity; for he is indifferent to good or evil report. However, he is not alone in this, there being another who is also free from vanity, he who is ranged among the rash, and that is the bad man. Again, they tell us that all good men are austere or harsh, because they neither have dealings with pleasure themselves nor tolerate those who have. The term harsh is applied, however, to others as well, and in much the same sense as a wine is said to be harsh when it is employed medicinally and not for drinking at all.

Again, the good are genuinely in earnest and vigilant for their own improvement, using a manner of life which banishes evil out of sight and makes what good there is in things appear. At the same time they are free from pretence; for they have stripped off all pretence or "make-up" whether in voice or in look. Free too are they from all business cares, declining to do anything which conflicts with duty. They will take wine, but not get drunk. Nay more, they will not be liable to madness either; not but what there will at times occur to the good man strange impressions due to melancholy or delirium, ideas not determined by the principle of what is choiceworthy but contrary to nature. Nor indeed will the wise man ever feel grief; seeing that grief is irrational contraction of the soul, as Apollodorus says in his *Ethics* (pp. 221-223).

The Stoics approve also of honouring parents and brothers in the second place next after the gods. They further maintain that parental affection for children is natural to the good, but not to the bad. It is one of their tenets that sins are all equal: so Chrysippus in the fourth book of his *Ethical Questions*, as well as Persaeus and Zeno. For if one truth is not more true than another, neither is one falsehood more

false than another, and in the same way one deceit is not more so than another, nor sin than sin. For he who is a hundred furlongs from Canopus and he who is only one furlong away are equally not in Canopus, and so too he who commits the greater sin and he who commits the less are equally not in the path of right conduct. But Heraclides of Tarsus, who was the disciple of Antipater of Tarsus, and Athenodorus both assert that sins are not equal.

Again, the Stoics say that the wise man will take part in politics, if nothing hinders him—so, for instance, Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On Various Types of Life*—since thus he will restrain vice and promote virtue. Also (they maintain) he will marry, as Zeno says in his *Republic*, and beget children. Moreover, they say that the wise man will never form mere opinions, that is to say, he will never give assent to anything that is false; that he will also play the Cynic, Cynicism being a short cut to virtue, as Apollo-dorus calls it in his *Ethics*; that he will even turn cannibal under stress of circumstances. They declare that he alone is free and bad men are slaves, freedom being power of independent action, whereas slavery is privation of the same: though indeed there is also a second form of slavery consisting in subordination, and a third which implies the correlative of such servitude being lordship; and this too is evil. Moreover, according to them not only are the wise free, they are also kings; kingship being irresponsible rule, which none but the wise can maintain: so Chrysippus in his treatise vindicating Zeno's use of terminology. For he holds that knowledge of good and evil is a necessary attribute of the ruler, and that no bad man is acquainted with this science. Similarly the wise and good alone are fit to be magistrates, judges, or orators, whereas among the bad there is not one so qualified. Furthermore, the wise are infallible, not being liable to error. They are also without offence; for they do no hurt to others or to themselves. At the same time they

are not pitiful and make no allowance for anyone; they never relax the penalties fixed by the laws, since indulgence and pity and even equitable consideration are marks of a weak mind, which affects kindness in place of chastizing. Nor do they deem punishments too severe (pp. 225-227).

It is a tenet of theirs that between virtue and vice there is nothing intermediate, whereas according to the Peripatetics there is, namely, the state of moral improvement. For, say the Stoics, just as a stick must be either straight or crooked, so a man must be either just or unjust. Nor again are there degrees of justice and injustice; and the same rule applies to the other virtues. Further, while Chrysippus holds that virtue can be lost, Cleanthes maintains that it cannot. According to the former it may be lost in consequence of drunkenness or melancholy; the latter takes it to be inalienable owing to the certainty of our mental apprehension. And virtue in itself they hold to be worthy of choice for its own sake. At all events we are ashamed of bad conduct as if we knew that nothing is really good but the morally beautiful. Moreover, they hold that it is in itself sufficient to ensure well-being; thus Zeno, and Chrysippus in the first book of his treatise *On Virtues*, and Hecato in the second book of his treatise *On Goods*, "For if magnanimity by itself alone can raise us far above everything, and if magnanimity is but a part of virtue, then too virtue as a whole will be sufficient in itself for well-being—despising all things that seem troublesome." Panaetius, however, and Posidonius deny that virtue is self-sufficing: on the contrary, health is necessary, and some means of living and strength.

Another tenet of theirs is the perpetual exercise of virtue, as held by Cleanthes and his followers. For virtue can never be lost, and the good man is always exercising his mind, which is perfect. Again, they say that justice, as well as law and right reason, exists by nature and not by convention: so



Chrysippus in his work *On the Morally Beautiful*. Neither do they think that the divergence of opinion between philosophers is any reason for abandoning the study of philosophy, since at that rate we should have to give up life altogether: so Posidonius in his *Exhortations*. Chrysippus allows that the ordinary Greek education is serviceable (pp. 231-233).

Of the three kinds of life, the contemplative, the practical, and the rational, they declare that we ought to choose the last, for that a rational being is expressly produced by nature for contemplation and for action. They tell us that the wise man will for reasonable cause make his own exit from life, on his country's behalf or for the sake of his friends, or if he suffer intolerable pain, mutilation, or incurable disease (p. 235).

### EPICTETUS

Some things are under our control, while others are not under our control. Under our control are conception, choice, desire, aversion, and, in a word, everything that is our own doing; not under our control are our body, our property, reputation, office, and, in a word, everything that is not our own doing. Furthermore, the things under our control are by nature free, unhindered, and unimpeded; while the things not under our control are weak, servile, subject to hindrance, and not our own. Remember, therefore, that if what is naturally slavish you think to be free, and what is not your own to be your own, you will be hampered, will grieve, will be in turmoil, and will blame both gods and men; while if you think only what is your own to be your own, and what is not your own to be, as it really is, not your own, then no one will ever be able to exert compulsion upon you, no one will hinder you, you will blame no one, will find fault

with no one, will do absolutely nothing against your will, you will have no personal enemy, no one will harm you, for neither is there any harm that can touch you.

With such high aims, therefore, remember that you must bestir yourself with no slight effort to lay hold of them, but you will have to give up some things entirely, and defer others for the time being. But if you wish for these things also, and at the same time for both office and wealth, it may be that you will not get even these latter, because you aim also at the former, and certainly you will fail to get the former, which alone bring freedom and happiness.

Make it, therefore, your study at the very outset to say to every harsh external impression, "You are an external impression and not at all what you appear to be." After that, examine it and test it by these rules which you have, the first and most important of which is this: Whether the impression has to do with the things which are under our control, or with those which are not under our control; and, if it has to do with some one of the things not under our control, have ready to hand the answer, "It is nothing to me." <sup>3</sup>

. . . . .

It is difficulties that show what men are. Consequently, when a difficulty befalls, remember that God, like a physical trainer, has matched you with a rugged young man. What for? some one says, So that you may become an Olympic victor; but that cannot be done without sweat. To my way of thinking no one has got a finer difficulty than the one which you have got, if only you are willing to make use of it as an athlete makes use of a young man to wrestle with. And now we are sending you to Rome as a scout, to spy out the land. But no one sends a coward as a scout, that, if he merely hears a noise and sees a shadow anywhere, he may come running back in terror and report "The enemy is already upon

<sup>3</sup> *Encheiridion*, tr. by W. A. Oldfather. Loeb Series.

us." So now also, if you should come and tell us, "The state of things at Rome is fearful; terrible is death, terrible is exile, terrible is reviling, terrible is poverty; flee, sirs, the enemy is upon us!" we shall say to you, "Away, prophesy to yourself! Our one mistake was that we sent a man like you as a scout."

Diogenes, who before you was sent forth as a scout, has brought us back a different report. He says, "Death is not an evil, since it is not dishonourable"; he says, "Ill repute is a noise made by madmen." And what a report this scout has made us about toil and about pleasure and about poverty! He says, "To be naked is better than any scarlet robe; and to sleep on the bare ground," he says, "is the softest couch." And he offers as a proof of each statement his own courage, his tranquillity, his freedom, and finally his body, radiant with health and hardened. "There is no enemy near," says he; "all is full of peace." How so, Diogenes? "Why, look!" says he, "I have not been struck with any missile, have I, or received any wound? I have not fled from anyone, have I?" This is what it means to be a proper scout, but you return and tell us one thing after another. Will you not go away again and observe more accurately, without this cowardice?

What am I to do, then?—What do you do when you disembark from a ship? You do not pick up the rudder, do you, or the oars? What do you pick up, then? Your own luggage, your oil-flask, your wallet. So now if you are mindful of what is your own property, you will never lay claim to that which is another's. He says to you, "Lay aside your broad scarlet hem." Behold, the narrow hem. "Lay aside this also." Behold, the plain toga. "Lay aside your toga." Behold, I am naked. "But you arouse my envy." Well, then take the whole of my paltry body. Do I any longer fear the man to whom I can throw my body? But he will not leave me as his heir. What then? Did I forget that none of these things is my own? How, then, do we call them "my own"? Merely as we call the bed in the inn "My own." If, then, the inn-

keeper dies and leaves you the beds, you will have them; but if he leaves them to someone else, he will have them, and you will look for another bed. If, then, you do not find one, you will have to sleep on the ground; only do so with good courage, snoring and remembering that tragedies find a place among the rich and among kings and tyrants, but no poor man fills a tragic rôle except as a member of the chorus. Now the kings commence in a state of prosperity:

“Hang the palace with garlands”;

then, about the third or fourth act, comes—

“Alas, Cithaeron, why didst thou receive me?”

Slave, where are your crowns, where your diadem? Do your guards avail you not at all? When, therefore, you approach one of those great men, remember all this—that you are approaching a tragic character, not the actor, but Oedipus himself. “Nay, but so-and-so is blessed; for he has many companions to walk with.” So have I; I fall in line with the multitude and have many companions to walk with. But, to sum it all up: remember that the door has been thrown open. Do not become a greater coward than the children, but just as they say, “I won’t play any longer,” when the thing does not please them, so do you also, when things seem to you to have reached that stage, merely say, “I won’t play any longer,” and take your departure; but if you stay, stop lamenting.<sup>4</sup>

. . . . .

God is helpful; but the good also is helpful. It would seem, therefore, that the true nature of the good will be found to be where we find that of God to be. What, then, is the true nature of God? Flesh? Far from it! Land? Far from it!

<sup>4</sup> *Discourses* Bk. I, Ch. 24, Vol. I, pp. 151-157.

Fame? Far from it! It is intelligence, knowledge, right reason. Here, therefore, and only here, shall you seek the true nature of the good. Surely you do not seek it at all in a plant, do you? No. Nor in an irrational creature? No. If, then, you seek it in that which is rational, why do you keep on seeking it somewhere else than in that which differentiates the rational from the irrational? Plants are incapable of dealing even with external impressions; for that reason you do not speak of the "good" in referring to them. The good requires, therefore, the faculty of using external impressions. Can that be all that it requires? For, if that be all, then you must assert that things good, and happiness and unhappiness, are to be found in the other animals as well as in man. But, as a matter of fact, you do not so assert, and you are right; for even if they have in the highest degree the faculty of using external impressions, still they do not have the faculty of understanding, at all events, their use of the external impressions. And with good reason; for they are born to serve others, and are not themselves of primary importance. The ass, for example, is not born to be of primary importance, is it? No; but because we had need of a back that was able to carry something. But, by Zeus, we had need that it should be able also to walk around; therefore it has further received the faculty of using external impressions; for otherwise it would not be able to walk around. And at about that stage there was an end. But if it, like man, had somehow received the faculty of understanding the use of its external impressions, it is also clear that consequently it would no longer be subject to us, nor would it be performing these services, but would be our equal and our peer.

Will you not, therefore, seek the true nature of the good in that quality the lack of which in all creatures other than man prevents you from using the term "good" of any of these? "But what then? Are not those creatures also works of God?" They are, but they are not of primary importance,

nor portions of Divinity. But you are a being of primary importance; you are a fragment of God; you have within you a part of Him. Why, then, are you ignorant of your own kinship? Why do you not know the sources from which you have sprung? Will you not bear in mind, whenever you eat, who you are that eat, and whom you are nourishing? Whenever you indulge in intercourse with women, who you are that do this? Whenever you mix in society, whenever you take physical exercise, whenever you converse, do you not know that you are nourishing God, exercising God? You are bearing God about with you, you poor wretch, and know it not! Do you suppose I am speaking of some external God, made of silver or gold? It is within yourself that you bear Him, and do not perceive that you are defiling Him with impure thoughts and filthy actions. Yet in the presence of even an image of God you would not dare to do anything of the things you are now doing. But when God Himself is present within you, seeing and hearing everything, are you not ashamed to be thinking and doing such things as these, O insensible of your own nature, and object of God's wrath! <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bk. II, Ch. 8, Vol. I, pp. 259-263.

## CHAPTER VII

### EARLY CHRISTIANITY

WHILE Stoicism and Epicureanism were at their height, there spread through the Greco-Roman world several eastern religions. One of these was Christianity. In the literature on the relationships among the eastern religions, the Greek philosophies and Christianity, arguments are advanced to show that Christianity is nothing more than a particular combination of pagan ideas. These attempts to explain Christianity in terms of Greek philosophies and Hellenistic religions have occasionally been extreme. For example, that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is an adaptation of the Neo-Platonic trinity is hardly tenable. The two trinities are totally distinct in attributes, activities, and purposes. Again, the attempt to find in Hermes Trismegistus the source of the Christian plan of salvation, the Christian sacraments and other Christian tenets has been definitely defeated.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless there are relations and marked similarities between elements of Christian teaching and elements of pagan systems. Plato, when he forbids the good man to wrong anyone and declares it is better to suffer than to commit injustice, anticipates the words of Jesus, "Love your enemies . . . do good to them that hate you. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Further, while Plato, Aristotle, and the Cynics had said that right living was not merely a matter of external action, Stoicism, with its reasoned contempt of external circumstances and its far wider appeal, more closely parallels Christian thought

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. G. Machen, *Origin of Paul's Religion*.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. 5:44.

by placing emphasis on the inwardness of true morality. Internal reformation was essential. Again, the Stoics are similar to the Christians in dividing all people into two groups, the wise and the foolish, the saved and the lost. The Stoics again were no less severe in their manner of asserting that "whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."<sup>3</sup> Like Christianity Stoicism, too, appealed to all classes of society, they both welcomed the slave as well as the Emperor.

It was the differences, however, and not the similarities which attracted the attention of those to whom Christianity first was preached. Superficial agreement did not obscure the fundamental antagonism. To the educated respectable citizen of the first century, not paganism but Christianity appeared immoral and atheistic. The Greeks considered Christians deficient in education; the Romans accused them of defective patriotism. In the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* the Romans designate the Christians as atheists and Lucian slurringly puts Epicureans, atheists, and Christians into one class. That those who saw paganism and Christianity at first hand, did not consider the latter as merely another innocuous pagan sect is poignantly attested by the blood which dyed the banner of those who followed in his train.

There is one fundamental difference between the pagan and Christian theories which makes all other differences appear subsidiary. According to Greek philosophy, the chief end of man was the perfect development of his natural abilities. Aristotle made contemplation the height of man's attainments because he regarded reason as man's highest function. The Stoics (in the selection quoted) said, "nature herself never gives us any but good inclinations." Epictetus says "You are a distinct portion of the essence of God and contain a certain part of him in yourself," cultivate therefore

<sup>3</sup> Jas. 2: 10.



the god within you. And the other schools say similar things.

But Christianity has not merely a totally different aim but a radically opposed one. In the New Testament instead of the development of the natural abilities the desirable thing is found to be the death of the natural man and the birth of a new and supernatural man. The death of the old nature is necessary because of its corruption. Even before birth every individual is implicated in Adam's original sin and alienated from the life of God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." <sup>4</sup> The result is that all have sinned, there is none righteous or capable of pleasing God in any respect whatever. This depraved nature, extending its corruption through all man's faculties, must therefore be eradicated and a new nature begotten.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 8:7, 8. Cf. also Rom. 5:12, 18, 19.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. . . . Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Eph. 2:3.

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Eph. 4:17-24.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Ps. 51:5.

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;  
And in sin did my mother conceive me."

"Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." <sup>5</sup>—And a few verses below the contrast between the natural and spiritual is made very distinct. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." <sup>6</sup> This new birth is accomplished not by the will of man but by the will of God which gives to those who believe on his only begotten Son the power to become sons of God. And the ethics of the gospels and epistles are based squarely on the Son's messianic mission to save the world. Without emphasizing the Christian belief in Jesus' messianically centered program, Christian ethics are completely misunderstood.

"It has not yet been sufficiently recognized that there is no ethical teaching of Jesus in the Gospels which does not derive its specific character from the consciousness of his Messiahship. Of course, general moral maxims occur, such as might have been enunciated at any time and under any circumstances, and are in so far independent of the historical situation. But these do not constitute the specific strand in Jesus' ethical teaching; they are not the things that render it new and unique. Some enlightened Jew of that period might and may have enunciated them before Him. But, if we take Jesus' ethical teaching as a specific phenomenon in the history of ethics, then it immediately springs into view that its differentiating character lies in its Messianic complexion. His contemporaries felt this better than the modernizers of his figure seem to do, for they recognized that his teaching was in authority unlike that of the Scribes. Nor did this relate merely to the difference between the Rabbinical appeal to tradition and the authoritativeness of the prophetic mode of speech in Jesus. The 'exousia' of Jesus far transcended the self-assurance wherewith the greatest prophet

<sup>5</sup> John 3:3.

<sup>6</sup> John 3:6.

might have claimed the identification of his message with the very word of God. Jesus speaks not only as authoritative, but as sovereign in the sphere of truth. One feels his authority in the world of ideas rests on his sovereignty in the realm of realities, to which the ideas belong. He did not come primarily to propound a new system of ethics as a thinker, but to summon into being a new kingdom of moral realities. He stands and speaks out of the midst of a great redemptive movement in which He is Himself the central and controlling factor. In this profound sense the Messianic idea underlies all the high idealism of his ethics, and alone renders it historically intelligible. Not the holding aloft of a high standard in the abstract, not the preaching that men should be sons of God, and perfect as the Father in heaven, and lovers of their neighbors, but the silent, majestic assumption that all this has now become possible, and is now to be called into being in a great epochal revelation, this is the element in the Gospels that can not be duplicated elsewhere. It is in evidence in the Sermon on the Mount, and that not only at the close, where Jesus represents Himself as in the day of judgment deciding the destiny of men on the basis of their ethical relation to Himself, but equally as much at the beginning, where He links to the fundamental ethical and religious requirements the absolute eschatological promises: *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven; *they* shall see God; *they* shall be satisfied with righteousness. Viewed in this light, the beatitudes are just as profoundly Messianic as the parable of the wise and foolish builders. We simply have no groups of moral teaching, from which the Messianic spirit, thus conceived, is absent. Nor is there any tradition-material in which Jesus appears preoccupied with his own ethical condition, as could not have failed to happen had his consciousness possessed no higher content than that of being the ethico-religious ideal.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Geerhardus Vos, *Self-Disclosure of Jesus*, pp. 61, 62.

Since, then, man must be redeemed from sin by the blood of Jesus before he can live a truly moral life, the chief end of man will not be the development of his corrupt unspiritual nature. And since the moral life is the expression of the new nature which Christ graciously or freely implants, the motive for moral action diverges widely from that of non-Christians.

In modern discussions the question of motive has held a more important place than in Greek philosophy. Why do men act morally? A popular view to-day and one which Plato espoused makes one act morally to merit or achieve eternal beatitude. On the whole the Greeks thought they answered the question by saying the moral life was best and immorality is the result of ignorance. No really educated man would be immoral. To-day, however, moral philosophers, denying the adequacy of this explanation, think it wise to admit the possibility of a man's knowing what is right and at the same time doing what is wrong. If this be true, one must answer again, why do men act morally? The problem becomes most acute when a right action apparently benefits another at the expense of the agent or when a wrong action apparently benefits the agent. One of the solutions was sympathy. Since man happens to be sympathetic he helps others at his own expense.

But Jesus gave his religion another motive. Without minimizing whatever efficacy sympathy has, Christianity regards neither it nor the Greek solution as satisfactory and fundamental. Further, it dissents radically from Plato's views that man achieves heaven on the basis of his moral endeavors. The early Christians made it quite clear that our own righteousness is as filthy rags, that all are under God's wrath and curse and that no one can save himself. Morality is not the cause but the consequence of redemption. Since the Christian is saved freely by God's grace the motive to virtuous action in general is our gratitude to him who has

redeemed us from the curse by giving his life a ransom for many.

The morality developing naturally from the implantation of a new nature does not parallel the Greek conception. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."<sup>8</sup> From the fundamental importance of the new birth flow all other differences.

In Greek ethics it was customary to distinguish between the practical or moral virtues, such as courage, justice, honor, and the theoretical or intellectual virtues. In both of these departments of life the fundamental chasm appears between the widely separated results. The names by which the virtues are called sometimes remain the same, but the concepts for which they stand are often quite different. For example, both the Greek and the Christian would call wisdom good. But what Aristotle or Epicurus called wisdom and thought good, the Christian might call foolishness. Plato, Aristotle and even the Stoics, we might say all pagan antiquity, so emphasized wisdom as to consider only the wise man, only the philosopher, as strictly virtuous. In the Bible as well, not only in the books of Solomon but in many other passages also, wisdom receives no meagre praise. But in the New Testament the natural wisdom of the Greeks which engenders pride is regarded as a possible stumbling block on the way to the Kingdom of God. Christ sent Paul "to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness. . . . For it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. . . . Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"<sup>9</sup>

There is a further passage which a philosophy instructor

<sup>8</sup> Gal. 6:8.

<sup>9</sup> I Cor. 1:17-20.

might properly impress on his students: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy." <sup>10</sup>

*I Cor.* I, II clearly states that the natural man is by his very nature incapable of understanding true wisdom. The wisdom of God is Jesus Christ himself, a reference to the opposing claims of the Gnostics, and in him, as *Colossians* continues, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Other passages speak of the darkened understanding of the natural man who can not please God. <sup>11</sup>

The evil deeds proceeding from a darkened understanding include among them some of the moral or practical virtues which were so highly praised by the Greek philosophers.

It may seem strange at first that the moral virtues even of a pagan are considered worthless from a Christian standpoint. But Christianity goes further and declares them to be not only worthless, but actually dangerous and harmful because, seeming good, they deceive. They lead one to put his trust in them, to rely on them alone whereas "without faith it is impossible to please" God.<sup>12</sup> The virtuous Greek was not able clearly to see his need of a new birth. Deceived by his own morality he was blinded to his own imperfection.

The most highly valued virtue in the ancient world, and the one least prized by Christians, was courage and patriotism. Courage, as Aristotle said, mirroring the prevailing conception, was essentially a political and war-time virtue. But the followers of the Christ who told Peter to sheath his sword, who declared that his kingdom was not of this world, abandoned the practice of courage and patriotism. They were willing to bear persecution; in fortitude they excelled, but patriotism seemed a vice. In this world the Christian is a pilgrim and a stranger. He is looking for a city whose builder and maker is God,<sup>13</sup> his citizenship is in heaven. They were

<sup>10</sup> Col. 2:8.

<sup>11</sup> Rom. 1:21-28.

<sup>12</sup> Heb. 11:6.

<sup>13</sup> Heb. 11:10.

willing to render to Caesar what was Caesar's.<sup>14</sup> Obedience to all laws which did not conflict with Christian principles, they insisted upon.<sup>15</sup> But their main attention was directed to rendering unto God what was God's.

Among the virtues catalogued by Aristotle, pride and high-mindedness is called "the crown of the virtues." Though Aristotle warns against conceit, yet the high-minded man, "will be only moderately pleased at great honors conferred upon him by virtuous people, as feeling that he obtains what is naturally his due or even less than his due." Christianity, on the contrary, emphasizes humility. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."<sup>16</sup> "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all."<sup>17</sup>

The astounding thing is that while the Greek schools in general appealed only to a select class of specially educated people and even with those usually failed of actual reform, as is pictured for us in Kingsley's *Hypatia*, and while the comparatively wide appeal of the Stoics neither affected the masses nor stayed the corruption of the Emperor's court, Christianity, within twenty-five years of its inception gave a totally new life to thousands and thousands. This new life most noticeably expressed itself in a virtue which the Stoics condemned and which certainly was absent from the practice of the public. In *Ben Hur*, or in the sources if they are open to us, the most abominable cruelty makes us recoil. Against this, the Christians preached and practiced love, pity, mercy. The Founder had a word of compassion for the woman taken in adultery, for the thief on the cross, and for the very ones who crucified him, "Father forgive them,

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 22: 21.

<sup>15</sup> I Peter 2: 12-15.

<sup>16</sup> Matt. 5: 3, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Mk. 10: 43, 44.

for they know not what they do." And in *Quo Vadis* the Christian, as he is being tortured on a cross, forgives and thereby converts Chilo Chilonides, his betrayer. Stoicism never achieved this state of mind. While it taught that all men were brothers, that the Sage will serve all, one would err if he admitted their troubles to his heart. For the Stoics, imperturbability is all important and the anguish of vicarious suffering, the very foundation of Christianity, is absolutely foreign both to Stoicism and to all the other schools. Love, then, is the striking Christian virtue. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," <sup>18</sup> and, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal . . . And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." <sup>19</sup>

The various other instances of the new life's divergence from the old, such as insistence on chastity, spiritual equality of the sexes and so on, while of great practical importance, contribute nothing to the development of theory. But there is one difference which can hardly be omitted and which appropriately concludes the chapter. It is the subject of death and the future. All peoples, it seems, including the Greeks and most of their philosophers, believe in life after death. Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Plato, all held this belief in some form or other. While these philosophers and the secret societies or mystery religions altered in some degree the original Homeric conceptions, yet most people were affected by the dreary and dismal picture of Hades which that poet gives. After death our shades, deprived of reasoning power, wander in gloom, in actual misery if our bodies are left unburied, and in general drag out a weary existence. A papyrus letter <sup>20</sup> from one friend to another on the death

<sup>18</sup> John 3:16.

<sup>19</sup> I Cor. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Oxyrh. 115. Contrast I Thess. 4:13.



of the latter's child says bluntly that in such trials there is no hope or consolation to be given. The Greeks loved a cheerful bodily existence in a world of sunlight and their views of death were not pleasant in the least. But while the Greeks at best hoped for a not too miserable immortality of the soul, the Christians enthusiastically proclaimed the resurrection of the body on the basis of the resurrection of their Founder attested by more than five hundred eye-witnesses. The immortality of a disembodied spirit in gloomy Hades and a complete bodily life of satisfying activity under the happiest conditions makes a decided contrast between pagan and Christian in all phases of life. The resurrection body, freed from earthly limitations, is to live in a world where there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, in a city which had no need of the sun, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The other-worldliness of the Christian is never more misrepresented than when it is said to produce gloom, for the New Testament is replete with expressions of joy and exhortations to be of good cheer. Death, then, is the passage to where one's treasure is. The grave is swallowed up in victory and death has lost its sting.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The aim here has been to record the Christian system as accurately as the space permitted and as sympathetically as possible. For an account which is frankly antagonistic, the student is advised to read the chapter in Paulsen's *System of Ethics*.

## SERMONS OF MOUNT AND PLAIN

(Goodspeed Translation)<sup>22</sup>*Matthew*

"Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them! "Blessed are the mourners, for they will be consoled! "Blessed are the humble-minded, for they will possess the land! "Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for uprightness, for they will be satisfied! "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy! "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God! "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called God's sons! "Blessed are those who have endured persecution for their uprightness, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them! "Blessed are you when people abuse you, and persecute you, and falsely say everything bad of you, on my account. Be glad and exult over it, for you will be richly

*Luke*

"Blessed are you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours! "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied! "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh! "Blessed are you when people hate you and exclude you and denounce you and spurn the name you bear as evil, on account of the Son of Man. Be glad when that happens, and leap for joy, for you will be richly rewarded in heaven, for that is the way their forefathers treated the prophets. "But alas for you who are rich, for you have had your comfort! "Alas for you who have plenty to eat now, for you will be hungry! "Alas for you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep! "Alas for you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is the way their forefathers treated the false

<sup>22</sup> *The Student's Gospels*, arranged by Shailer Mathews. University of Chicago Press, 1927.

rewarded in heaven, for that is the way they persecuted the prophets who went before you! "You are the salt of the earth! But if salt loses its strength, how can it be made salt again? It is good for nothing but to be thrown away and trodden underfoot. You are the light of the world! A city that is built upon a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a peck-measure; they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. Your light must burn in that way among men so that they will see the good you do, and praise your Father in heaven.

"Do not suppose that I have come to do away with the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to do away with them but to enforce them. For I tell you, as long as heaven and earth endure, not one dotting of an *i* or crossing of a *t* will be dropped from the Law until it is all observed. Anyone, therefore, who weakens one of the slightest of

prophets! "But I tell you who hear me, love your enemies, treat those who hate you well, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To the man that strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from the man who takes away your coat, do not keep back your shirt either. Give to everyone that asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. And treat men just as you wish them to treat you. If you love only those who love you, what merit is there in that? For even godless people love those who love them. And if you help only those who help you, what merit is there in that? Even godless people act in that way. And if you lend only to people from whom you expect to get something, what merit is there in that? Even godless people lend to godless people, meaning to get it back again in full. But love your enemies, and help them and lend to them, never despairing, and you will be richly

these commands and teaches others to do so, will be ranked lowest in the Kingdom of Heaven; but anyone who observes them and teaches others to do so will be ranked high in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your uprightness is far superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never even enter the Kingdom of Heaven! "You have heard that the men of old were told 'You shall not murder,' and 'Whoever murders will have to answer to the court.' But I tell you that anyone who gets angry with his brother will have to answer to the court, and anyone who speaks contemptuously to his brother will have to answer to the great council, and anyone who says to his brother 'You cursed fool!' will have to answer for it in the fiery pit! So when you are presenting your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother has any grievance against you, leave your gift right there before the altar and go and make up with

rewarded, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind even to the ungrateful and the wicked. You must be merciful, just as your Father is. Do not judge others, and they will not judge you. Do not condemn them, and they will not condemn you. Excuse others and they will excuse you. Give, and they will give to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, they will pour into your lap. For the measure you use with others they in turn will use with you." And he used a figure, saying, "Can one blind man lead another? Will they not both fall into a hole? A pupil is not better than his teacher, but every pupil when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you keep looking at the speck in your brother's eye, and pay no attention to the beam that is in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, just let me get that speck out of your eye,' when you cannot see the beam in your own eye? You hypocrite. First

your brother; then come back and present your gift. Be quick and come to terms with your opponent while you are on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you, you will never get out again until you have paid the last penny! "You have heard that men were told 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman with desire has already committed adultery with her in his heart. But if your right eye makes you fall, tear it out and throw it away, for you might better lose one part of your body than have it all thrown into the pit! If your right hand makes you fall, cut it off and throw it away! For you might better lose one part of your body than have it all go down to the pit! "They were told, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife

get the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see to get out the speck in your brother's eye. For sound trees do not bear bad fruit, nor bad trees sound fruit. Every tree is known by its fruit. They do not pick figs off thorns, or gather grapes from brambles. A good man, out of the good he has accumulated in his heart, produces good, and a bad man, out of what he has accumulated that is bad, produces what is bad. For his mouth says only what his heart is full of. Why do you call me: 'Lord! Lord!' and not do what I tell you? If anyone comes to me and listens to this teaching of mine and acts upon it, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man who was building a house, who dug deep and laid his foundation upon the rock, and when there was a flood the torrent burst upon that house and could not shake it, because it was well built. But the man who listens to it, and does not act upon it, is like a man who built a house on the ground

on any ground, except unfaithfulness, makes her commit adultery, and anyone who marries her after she is divorced commits adultery. "Again, you have heard that the men of old were told, 'You shall not swear falsely, but you must fulfil your oaths to the Lord.' But I tell you not to swear at all, either by heaven, for it is God's throne, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. You must not swear by your own head, for you cannot make one single hair white or black. But your way of speaking must be 'Yes' or 'No.' Anything that goes beyond that comes from the evil one. "You have heard that they were told, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist injury, but if anyone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him too; and if anyone wants to sue for your shirt, let him have your coat too. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go two miles with him. If anyone begs from you,

without any foundation. The torrent burst upon it, and it collapsed at once, and the wreck of that house was complete."

*Matthew*

give it him, and when anyone wants to borrow from you, do not turn away. "You have heard that they were told, 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for your persecutors, so that you may show yourselves true sons of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on bad and good alike, and makes the rain fall on the upright and the wrongdoers. For if you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect? Do not the very tax-collectors do that? And if you are polite to your brothers and no one else, what is there remarkable in that? Do not the very heathen do that? So you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is.

"But take care not to do your good deeds in public for people to see, for if you do, you will get no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you are going to give to charity, do not blow a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do, in the

synagogues and the streets, to make people praise them. I tell you, that is all the reward they will get! But when you give to charity, your own left hand must not know what your right hand is doing, so that your charity may be secret, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you. When you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they like to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the squares, to let people see them. I tell you, that is the only reward they will get! But when you pray, go into your own room, and shut the door, and pray to your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not repeat empty phrases as the heathen do, for they imagine that their prayers will be heard if they use words enough. You must not be like them. For God, who is your Father, knows what you need before you ask him. This, therefore, is the way you are to pray:

*Matthew*

'Our Father in heaven,  
Your name be revered!  
Your kingdom come!  
Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven!  
Give us today bread for the day,  
And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not subject us to temptation,  
But save us from the evil one.'

For if you forgive others when they offend you, your heavenly Father will forgive you too. But if you do not forgive others when they offend you, your heavenly Father will not forgive you for your offenses. When you fast, do not put on a gloomy look, like the hypocrites, for they neglect their personal appearance to let people see that they are fasting. I tell you that is all the reward they will get. But when you fast, perfume your hair and wash your face, so that no one may see that you are fasting, except your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is secret, will reward you. Do not store up your riches on earth, where moths and rust destroy them, and where thieves break in and steal them, but store up your riches in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. For wherever your treasure is, your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eye is sound, your whole body will be light, but if your eye is unsound, your whole body will be dark. If, therefore your very light is darkness how deep the darkness will be! No slave can belong to two masters, for he will either hate one and love the other, or stand by one and make light of the other. You cannot serve God and money. Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about life, wondering what you will have to eat or drink, or about your body, wondering what you will have to wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body than clothes?



*Matthew*

Look at the wild birds. They do not sow or reap, or store their food in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more account than they? But which of you with all his worry can add a single hour to his life? Why should you worry about clothing? See how the wild flowers grow. They do not toil or spin, and yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his splendor was never dressed like one of them. But if God so beautifully dresses the wild grass, which is alive today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more surely clothe you, you who have so little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What shall we have to eat?' or 'What shall we have to drink?' or 'What shall we have to wear?' For these are all things the heathen are in pursuit of, and your heavenly Father knows well that you need all this. But you must make his kingdom, and uprightness before him, your greatest care, and you will have all these other things besides. So do not

worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries of its own. Let each day be content with its own ills.

"Pass no more judgments upon other people, so that you may not have judgment passed upon you. For you will be judged by the standard you judge by, and men will pay you back with the same measure you have used with them. Why do you keep looking at the speck in your brother's eye, and pay no attention to the beam that is in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Just let me get that speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a beam in your own? You hypocrite! First get the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see to get the speck out of your brother's eye. Do not give what is sacred to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces. Ask, and what you ask will be given you. Search, and you will find what you search for. Knock, and the door will

*Matthew*

open to you. For it is always the one who asks who receives, and the one who searches who finds, and the one who knocks to whom the door opens. Which of you men when his son asks him for some bread will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake? So if you, bad as you are, know enough to give your children what is good, how much more surely will your Father in heaven give what is good to those who ask him for it! Therefore, you must always treat other people as you would like to have them treat you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Go in at the narrow gate. For the road that leads to destruction is broad and spacious, and there are many who go in by it. But the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few that find it. Beware of the false prophets, who come to you disguised as sheep but are ravenous wolves underneath. You can tell them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? Just so any sound tree bears good fruit, but a poor tree bears bad fruit. No sound tree can bear bad fruit, and no poor tree can bear good fruit. Any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and burned. So you can tell them by their fruit. It is not everyone who says to me 'Lord! Lord!' who will get into the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that Day, 'Lord! Lord! Was it not in your name that we prophesied, and by your name that we did many mighty acts?' Then I will say to them plainly, 'I never knew you! Go away from me, you who do wrong!' Everyone, therefore, who listens to this teaching of mine and acts upon it, will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. And the rain fell, and the rivers rose, and the winds blew, and beat about that house, and it did not go down, for its foundations were on rock. And anyone who listens to this teach-

*Matthew*

ing of mine and does not act the rivers rose, and the winds  
upon it, will be like a foolish blew and beat upon that  
man who built his house on house, and it went down, and  
sand. And the rain fell and its downfall was complete."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MIDDLE AGES<sup>1</sup>

THE long period generally designated "medieval" extends from the beginning of the Christian era to the Renaissance. It is customary to separate this into two lesser periods: the revival of learning under Charlemagne dividing the earlier Patristic from the later Scholastic or more properly Medieval. We choose for study the two outstanding thinkers of these two periods: S. Augustine, S. Thomas Aquinas.

Aurelius Augustine was born in 354 at Tagaste, a small town in northern Africa not far from Carthage. His father, a pagan, was an official of his town, but of very moderate means. His mother, Monica, was a Christian of outstanding character. Augustine himself, however, remained unbaptised until 387. In the meantime he had been educated in the schools of nearby towns and at Carthage. His exceptional abilities were even then noted, but he soon became dissatisfied with conditions at Carthage. Accordingly in 383 he left for Rome, both to continue his studies and to open a school of rhetoric. He had, while still in Africa, joined the Manicheans. "From his many allusions to its tenets, it appears to have been a strange medley of idealism and materialism, asceticism and license, theosophy and rationalism, free thought and superstition." He remained nominally a member of this sect, apparently until his conversion; but he had gradually been growing away from it for some time, accepting first the scepticism of the Academy (the school founded by Plato), and then more fervently Neo-Platonism, which

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is the work of Dr. Francis Palmer Clarke, Instructor in Philosophy in the University of Pennsylvania.

ever after strongly influenced his thought. In 384 Augustine was appointed Professor of Rhetoric at Milan (a government position). While there he came under the influence of its bishop, Ambrose. Resigning his chair, he retired with some close friends to a nearby villa for study and meditation. Soon after his baptism (Easter 387) he returned to his former home, founding the first monastery in Africa. On a visit to Hippo in 391 he was forced to yield to popular pressure and became the assistant to the bishop, whom four years later he succeeded. He died at Hippo in 430.

The writings of S. Augustine are naturally the expression of his predominant interests. Two in particular have become classics: *The Confessions*, an autobiography written about 400; and *The City of God* composed from 413 to 426, and written in answer to the charge that Rome had been sacked (410) because the city had forsaken its ancient gods and accepted Christianity. While in retirement just before his baptism he devoted himself mainly to philosophical discussions, whose results are preserved in a few writings. But the better part of his writings belong to his activities as Bishop of Hippo.

We do not find, then, in the writings of his maturity, systematic treatises on philosophic questions; but rather his philosophy must be gathered from writings devoted mainly to other topics.

Yet so to phrase the problem is to suggest a point of view quite foreign to Augustine himself. For him there can be no difference between true philosophy and the Christian religion. God and the soul are the two poles of his thought. "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thyself, and restless is our heart till it find its rest in Thee." For the "heart," that is the will, and charity or love as the expression of that will, form the center of Augustine's psychology and ethics. Only in God, the complete and highest good, can the will find its final satisfaction; only God is a good to be *enjoyed*; all other

goods are but *used*. That is, all else is but a means to the attainment of that which is loved for itself alone.

But true philosophy not only shows man what is his true end, but provides him also with the means for attaining it. It is mainly in this that the superiority of Christianity to Platonism is to be found. Thus the ethics of Augustine is not a mere intellectual analysis of the good or of the principles of morality: it is an exposition of the Christian revelation, the means for attaining the end. For Christian philosophy considers revelation as an enlightenment of the reason, not as opposed to it; and equally in the moral sphere, as a source of strength for the will to enable it to attain what else it must fail of. Thus the coöperation of God is necessary in every act of thought and of will. For God is precisely that light by which the soul perceives the truth.

Now ideas as affecting the will are called motives. But the soul cannot originate motives; it can only accept or reject them. God is necessary then for the presentation of these motives: man's will for the use made of them. We are responsible for our choice, though not for the presence of the motives among which we choose. For none of these motives is irresistible; they are not mechanical forces.

## THE CITY OF GOD

### TRUE BEATITUDE<sup>2</sup>

But if we observe aright: none lives as he list, without he is happy, and no one is happy, without being righteous, yet the just man lives not as he pleases, until he attain that sure, eternal, hurtless, undeceiving state. That he naturally desires, nor can he be perfect, until he have his desire. But what man here upon earth can say he lives as he pleases,

<sup>2</sup> *The City of God*, by Saint Augustine, translated by John Healey (1610). John Grant, 1909. Book 14, Chapter 25.

when his life is not in his own hand? he would fain live, and he must die. How then lives he as he pleases, that lives not as long as he pleases? But if he desires to die, how can he live as he desires when he does not wish to live at all? and if he desire to die, not to forego all life, but to change it for a better, then lives he not as he likes, but attains that by dying. But admit this, he lives as he likes, because he has forced himself, and brought himself to this, to desire nothing but what is in his power, as Terence says: "Since you cannot have what you would have, desire that which you may have:" yet is he not blessed, because he is patiently wretched. For beatitude is not attained unless it be loved. And if it be both attained and loved, then must this love needs surmount all other, because all other things are loved for this. And if this be loved as it ought to be (for he that loves not beatitude as it ought to be loved cannot be happy) then he cannot help desiring it to be eternal. So that the blessed life must needs be joined with eternity.

THE TWO CITIES <sup>3</sup>

Two loves therefore, have given original to these two cities: self-love in contempt of God unto the earthly, love of God in contempt of one's self to the heavenly; the first seeks the glory of men, and the latter desires God only as the testimony of the conscience, the greatest glory. That glories in itself, and this in God. That exalts itself in self-glory: this says to God: "My glory and the lifter up of my head." That boasts of the ambitious conquerors, led by the lust of sovereignty: in this every one serves other in charity, both the rulers in counselling and the subjects in obeying. That loves worldly virtue in the potentates: this says unto God, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength." And the wise men of that, follow either the good things of the body, or mind, or both: living according to the flesh: and such as might

<sup>3</sup> Book, 14, Chapter 28.

know God, honoured Him not as God, nor were thankful but became vain in their own imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: for professing themselves to be wise, that is, extolling themselves proudly in their wisdom, they became fools: changing the glory of the incorruptible God to the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds and four-footed beasts and serpents: for they were the people's guides, or followers unto all those idolatries, and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed for ever. But in this other, this heavenly city, there is no wisdom of man, but only the piety that serves the true God and expects a reward in the society of the holy angels, and men, that God may be all in all.

#### ETERNAL PEACE <sup>4</sup>

We may therefore say that peace is our final good, as we said of life eternal: because the psalm says unto that city whereof we write this laborious work: "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise thy Lord, O Sion: for He hath made fast the bars of thy gates, and blessed thy children within thee; He giveth peace in thy borders." When the bars of the gates are fast, as none can come in, so none can go out. And therefore this peace which we call final, is the borders and bounds of this city: for the mystical name hereof, Jerusalem, signifies 'a vision of peace:' but because the name of peace is ordinary in this world where eternity is not resident, therefore we choose rather to call the bound wherein the chief good of this city lies, 'life eternal,' rather than 'peace.' Of which end the apostle says, "Now being freed from sin, and made servants to God, ye have your fruit in holiness, and the end, everlasting life." But on the other side, because such as are ignorant in the Scriptures may take this "everlasting life" in an ill sense, for the life of the wicked, which is eternally evil, either, as some philosophers held, because

<sup>4</sup> Book 19, Chapter 11.



the soul cannot die, or, as our faith teaches, because torments cannot cease: yet would not the wicked feel them eternally, unless they have also their eternal life: therefore the main end of this city's aim is, either to be called, Eternity in peace, or Peace in eternity, and thus it is plain to all. For the good of peace is generally the greatest wish of the world, and the most welcome when it comes. Whereof I think we may take leave of our reader, to have a word or two more, both because of the city's end, whereof we now speak, and of the sweetness of peace, which all men do love.

THE RELATION OF TEMPORAL TO ETERNAL PEACE <sup>5</sup>

The body's peace therefore is an orderly disposal of the parts thereof: the unreasonable soul's, a good temperature of the appetites thereof: the reasonable soul's, a true harmony between the knowledge, and the performance. That of body and soul alike, a temperate and undiseased habit of nature in the whole creature. The peace of mortal man with immortal God, is an orderly obedience unto His eternal law, performed in faith. Peace of man and man, is a mutual concord: peace of a family, an orderly rule and subjection amongst the parts thereof: peace of a city, an orderly command, and obedience amongst the citizens: peace of God's City a most orderly coherence in God, and fruition of God: peace of all things, is a well disposed order. For order, is a good disposition of discrepant parts, each in the fittest place, and therefore the miserable (as they are miserable), are out of order, wanting that peaceable and unperturbed state which order exacts. But because their own merits have incurred this misery, therefore even herein they are imposed in a certain set order howsoever. Being not conjoined with the blessed, but severed from them by the law of order, and being exposed to miseries, yet these are adapted unto the places wherein they are resident, and so are digested into

<sup>5</sup> Book 19, Chapters 13-14.

some kind of methodical form, and consequently into some peaceful order. But this is their misery, that although that some little security wherein they live, may exempt them from present sorrows, yet are they not in that state which secludes sorrow for ever, and affords eternal security. And their misery is far greater if they want the peace of nature: and when they are offended, the part that grieves is the first disturber of their peace: for that which is neither offended, nor dissolved, preserves the peace of nature still. So then as one may possibly live without grief, but cannot possibly grieve unless he live: so may there be peace without any war or contention: but contention cannot be without some peace (not as it is contention, but), because the contenders do suffer and perform diverse things herein according to nature's pre-script, which things could not consist, had they not some peaceful order amongst them. So that there may be a nature (you see) where no evil may have inherence, but to find a nature utterly void of goodness, is utterly impossible. For the very nature of the devils (considered as nature) is most excellent, but their own voluntary perverseness depraved it. The devil abode not in the truth, yet escaped he not the sentence of the truth: for he transgressed the peaceful law of order, yet could not avoid the powerful hand of the Orderer.

The good which God had bestowed on his nature, cleared him not from God's heavy judgment which allotted him to punishment. Yet does not God herein punish the good which Himself created, but the evil which the devil committed: nor did He take away his whole nature from him, but left him part, whereby to bewail the loss of the rest: which lamentation, testifies both what he had and what he has: for had he not some good left, he could not lament for what he had lost. For his guilt is the greater that having lost all his uprightness, should rejoice at the loss thereof. And he that is sick, if it benefit him nothing yet grieves at the loss of his health. For

uprightness and health being both good in themselves, it behoves the losers of them to mourn, and not to rejoice, unless this loss be repaired with better recompence, as uprightness of mind is better than health of body: but far more reason has the sinner to lament in his suffering than to rejoice in his transgression. Therefore even as to rejoice at the loss of goodness in sinning, argues a depraved will: so likewise lament for the same loss, in suffering, proves a good nature. For he that bewails the loss of his natural peace, has his light from the remainder of that peace, which are left in him, keeping his nature and him in concord.

And in the last judgment, it is but reasonable that the wicked should deplore the loss of their natural goods, and feel God's hand justly heavy in depriving them of them, whom they scornfully respected not in the bestowing them upon them. Wherefore the high God, nature's wisest Creator, and most just Disposer, the Parent of the world's fairest wonder (mankind) bestowed divers good things upon him, which serve for this life only, as the worldly and temporal peace, kept by honest coherence and society: together with all the adjuncts of this peace, as the visible light, the spirable air; the potable water; and all the other necessities of meat, drink, and clothing: but with this condition, that he that shall use them in their due manner, and reference unto human peace, shall be rewarded with gifts of far greater moment, namely with the peace of immortality, and with unshaded glory, and full fruition of God, and his brother, in the same God: but he that uses them amiss, shall neither partake of the former nor the latter.

. . . . .

All temporal things are referred unto the benefit of the peace which is resident in the terrestrial city, by the members thereof: and unto the use of the eternal peace, by the citizens of the Heavenly society. Wherefore if we wanted

reason, we should desire only an orderly state of body, and a good temperature of desires: nothing but fleshly ease, and fulness of pleasure. For the peace of the body augments the quiet of the soul: and if it be awanting, it procures a disturbance even in brute beasts, because the emotions have not their true temperature.

Now both these combined add unto the peace of soul and body both, that is, unto the healthful order of life. For as all creatures shew how they desire their bodies' peace, in avoiding the causes of their hurt: and their souls', in following their appetites when need requires: so in flying of death; they make it as apparent how much they set by their peace of soul and body. But man having a reasonable soul, subjects all his actions common to animals, unto the peace of that, to work so both in his contemplation and action, that there may be a true consonance between them both, and this we call the peace of the reasonable soul. To this end he is to avoid molestation by grief, disturbance by desire, and dissolution by death, and to aim at profitable knowledge, whereunto his actions may be conformable. But lest his own infirmity, through the much desire to know, should draw him into any pestilent inconvenience of error, he must have a divine instruction, to whose directions and assistance, he is to assent with firm and free obedience. And because that during this life, "He is absent from the Lord, he walketh by faith, and not by sight," and therefore he refers all his peace of body, of soul, and of both, unto that peace which mortal man has with immortal God: to live in an orderly obedience under His eternal law, by faith.

Now God, our good Master, teaching us in the two great commandments the love of Him, and the love of our neighbour, to love three things, God, our neighbour, and ourselves, and seeing he that loves God, offends not in loving himself: it follows that he ought to counsel his neighbour to love God, and to provide for him in the love of God,

sure he is commanded to love him, as his own self. So must he do for his wife, children, family, and all men besides: and wish likewise that his neighbour would do as much for him, in his need: thus shall he be settled in peace and orderly concord with all the world. The order whereof is, first, to do no man hurt, and secondly, to help all that he can. So that his own have the first place in his care, and those, his place and order in human society affords him more conveniency to benefit. Whereupon St. Paul says, "He that provideth not for his own, and, namely, for them that be of his household, denieth the faith, and is worse than an infidel." For this is the foundation of domestic peace, which is, an orderly rule, and subjection in the parts of the family, wherein the provisors are the commanders, as the husband over his wife: parents over their children, and masters over their servants: and they that are provided for, obey, as the wives do their husbands, children their parents, and servants their masters. But in the family of the faithful man, the heavenly pilgrim, there the commanders are indeed the servants of those they seem to command: ruling not in ambition, but being bound by careful duty: not in proud sovereignty, but in nourishing pity.

MAN'S SUBJECTION TO MAN AROSE FROM SIN<sup>6</sup>

Thus has nature's order prescribed, and man by God was thus created. "Let them rule," saith He, "over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and over everything that creepeth upon the earth." He made him reasonable, and lord only over the unreasonable, not over man, but over beasts. Whereupon the first holy men were rather shepherds than kings, God shewing herein what both the order of the creation desired, and what the merit of sin exacted. For justly was the burden of servitude laid upon the back of transgression. And therefore in all the Scriptures we never

<sup>6</sup> Book 19, Chapter 15.

read the word servant, until such time as that just man Noah laid it as a curse upon his offending son. So that it was guilt, and not nature that gave original unto that name. . . .

Sin therefore is the mother of servitude, and first cause of man's subjection to man: which notwithstanding comes not to pass but by the direction of the highest, in whom is no injustice, and who alone knows best how to proportionate his punishment unto man's offences. . . . But in the peaceful orders of states, wherein one man is under another, as humility does benefit the servant, so does pride endamage the superior. But take a man as God created him at first, and so he is neither slave to man nor to sin. But penal servitude had the institution from that law which commands the conservation, and forbids the disturbance of nature's order: for if that law had not first been transgressed, penal servitude had never been enjoined.

Therefore the apostle warns servants to obey their masters and to serve them with cheerfulness, and good will: to the end that if they cannot be made free by their masters, they make their servitude a freedom to themselves, by serving them, not in deceitful fear, but in faithful love, until iniquity be overpassed, and all man's power and principality disannulled, and God only be all in all.

#### THE RELATION OF THE TWO CITIES IN THIS LIFE <sup>7</sup>

But they that live not according to faith, angle for all their peace in the sea of temporal profits: whereas the righteous live in full expectation of the glories to come, using the occurrences of this world, but as pilgrims, not to abandon their courses towards God for mortal respects, but thereby to assist the infirmity of the corruptible flesh, and make it more able to encounter with toil and trouble. Wherefore the necessities of this life are common, both to the faithful and the infidel, and to both their families:

<sup>7</sup> Book 19, Chapter 17.

but the ends of their two usages thereof are far different.

The faithless, "worldly city" aims at earthly peace, and settles the self therein, only to have an uniformity of the citizens' wills in matters only pertaining to mortality. And the "Heavenly City," or rather that part thereof, which is as yet a pilgrim on earth and lives by faith, uses this peace also: as it should, it leaves this mortal life, wherein such a peace is requisite, and therefore lives (while it is here on earth) as if it were in captivity, and having received the promise of redemption, and divers spiritual gifts as seals thereof, it willingly obeys such laws of the "temporal city" as order the things pertaining to the sustenance of this mortal life, to the end that both the cities might observe a peace in such things as are pertinent hereunto. But because that the "earthly city" has some members whom the Holy Scriptures utterly disallow, and who standing either too well affected to the devils, or being deluded by them, believed that each thing had a peculiar deity over it, and belonged to the charge of a several god: as the body to one, the soul to another, and in the body itself the head to one, the neck to another, and so of every member: as likewise of the soul, one had the wit, another the learning, a third the wrath, a fourth the desire: as also in other necessities or accidents belonging to man's life, the cattle, the corn, the wine, the oil, the woods, the monies, the navigation, the wars, the marriages, the generations, each being a several charge unto a particular power, whereas the citizens of the "Heavenly State" acknowledged but one only God, to whom that worship, which is called *λατρεία* was peculiarly and solely due; hence came it that the "two hierarchies" could not be combined in one religion, but must needs dissent herein, so that the good part was fain to bear the pride and persecution of the bad, had not their own multitude sometimes, and the providence of God continually stood for their protection.

This "celestial society" while it is here on earth, increases

itself out of all languages, never respecting the temporal laws that are made against so good and religious a practice: yet not breaking, but observing their diversity in divers nations, all which do tend unto the preservation of earthly peace, if they oppose not the adoration of one only God. So that you see, the "Heavenly City" observes and respects this temporal peace here on earth, and the coherence of men's wills in honest morality, as far as it may with a safe conscience; yea, and so far desires it, making use of it for the attainment of the peace eternal: which is so truly worthy of that name, as that the orderly and uniform combination of men in the fruition of God, and of one another in God, is to be accounted the reasonable creature's only peace, which being once attained, mortality is banished, and life then is the true life indeed, nor is the carnal body any more an encumbrance to the soul, by corruptibility, but is now become spiritual, perfected, and entirely subject unto the sovereignty of the will.

This peace is that unto which the pilgrim in faith refers the other which he has here in his pilgrimage, and then lives he according to faith, when all that he does for the obtaining hereof is by himself referred unto God, and his neighbour withal, because being a citizen, he must not be all for himself, but sociable in his life and actions.

The change from S. Augustine to S. Thomas (1225-1274) is, from the philosophical point of view, largely a change from Platonism to Aristotelianism. This involves especially a different psychology and theory of knowledge. It also brings about a different formulation of the relations between philosophy and theology. While S. Thomas holds as strongly as S. Augustine that the reason needs strengthening, guidance



and supplementing by revelation, yet the effect of his position is to allow to the reason an autonomy within its own sphere which the Augustinians viewed with suspicion. In fact, the philosophical disciplines for S. Thomas are marked off from the theological precisely in that they deal with philosophical problems from the point of view of the unaided human reason, while theology starts from the data of revelation. Accordingly, abstractly at least, there is possible a philosophy quite independent of theology. Yet it is noteworthy that at no time does S. Thomas attempt to construct such a philosophy. It is quite true that he clearly distinguishes arguments drawn from philosophy and experience and those drawn from revelation; but the framework of his systematic writings is that of theology, not of philosophy. Particularly in the field of ethics are the inadequacies of reason patent; it is largely upon the failures of philosophy to formulate and establish a satisfactory ethic that the rationality of revelation is based.

The historian of philosophy is then confronted by a difficult task when he seeks to expound the philosophy of Aquinas. If he tries to abstract the purely philosophical elements from the writings, there is grave danger that the result will prove totally inadequate to portray the real thought of his author. On the other hand, if he includes the theology, it is evident that he has left his own field and has ignored the distinction indicated by S. Thomas himself.

We may nevertheless offer the following brief outline of the ethics of Aquinas.

Ethics is concerned with the nature of man and his activities as related to his ultimate end. The true end of man is the possession of God, who is infinite good. This possession, while primarily of the intellect, involves also the complete satisfaction of the will. The will is necessarily moved toward the good; but it can be moved only toward a *known* good, hence the primacy of the intellect. But any particular

good, as a means toward *the* good, is conceived as not constituting the only way of obtaining the final goal (i. e., it does not exhaust universal good); hence on the basis of this rational perception rests man's freedom of choice. But also because of these various roads to the final good, we need proximate criteria. These criteria are found in the natural objects of man's faculties, for man tends to the natural ultimate end when he tends to the immediate natural end of his own being as man. But the immediate end is the natural object or end of one of his appetites or faculties.

The permanent dispositions by which man ordains his life in his striving for the good are the moral virtues. Since these virtues all pertain to the active life, they remain subordinate to man's highest faculty, that of the speculative reason or contemplation. Indeed their final value lies in the fact that they make possible the undisturbed contemplation of the truth, by removing the disturbances of unruly passions. But the contemplative life fully satisfies the entire man: directly, the intellect and will; indirectly, the appetites and passions which are subordinated thereto and which receive a "sublimated" satisfaction in the exercise of the higher faculty.

Not only are the good and virtue concepts necessary to ethics; duty also must be considered. This rest upon law. Law is always a function of reason and a rule of action. Of those laws by which men are governed there are four principal kinds:

1. The *eternal* law is the plan of Divine Wisdom in accordance with which the world is created and governed. It imposes then upon everything that which is its nature, thus binds it to a rule of action. It is primarily as existing in God (the ideas as exemplars in the mind of God) that it is called the eternal law.

2. As existing in the subject ruled, it is known as the *natural* law. Since in man reason is the controlling and

guiding faculty, the natural law is the law of reason. The natural law is, to be sure, founded on the natural appetites or needs of man, but through reason man becomes aware of the natural law (hence reason may be said to promulgate it); and by reason the appetites are controlled (hence reason may be said to enforce the natural law).

3. Man is by nature a political animal; i. e., he must live in an organized society. This requires *human* laws, which are derived from and grounded in the natural law. (The latter, e. g., demands that the state be supported; but the determination of the method lies with the positive or human law.)

4. Finally there is the (positive) *divine* law; which, being directly revealed by God, points out the way and enables man to attain not so much his natural as his supernatural end. Its consideration belongs therefore not to philosophy but to theology.

## THE TREATISE ON LAW<sup>8</sup>

### THE ESSENCE OF LAW

Law is a rule and measure of acts, whereby man is induced to act or is restrained from acting: for *lex* (law) is derived from *ligare* (to bind), because it binds one to act. Now the rule and measure of human acts is the reason, which is the first principle of human acts, as is evident from what has been stated above (Q. I., A. 1 *ad* 3); since it belongs to the reason to direct to the end, which is the first principle in all matters of action, according to the Philosopher (*Phys.* ii). Now that which is the principle in any genus, is the rule and measure of that genus: for instance, unity in the genus of numbers, and the first movement in the genus of

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theologica*, First Part of the Second Part, Questions XC-XCVI. From edition published by Burns, Oates & Washburn, London.

movements. Consequently it follows that law is something pertaining to reason.

Since law is a kind of rule and measure, it may be in something in two ways. First, as in that which measures and rules: and since this is proper to reason, it follows that, in this way, law is in the reason alone.—Secondly, as in that which is measured and ruled. In this way, law is in all those things that are inclined to something by reason of some law: so that any inclination arising from a law, may be called a law, not essentially but by participation as it were. And thus the inclination of the members to concupiscence is called *the law of the members*.

Just as, in external action, we may consider the work and the work done, for instance the work of building and the house built; so in the acts of reason, we may consider the act itself of reason, i. e., to understand and to reason, and something produced by this act. With regard to the speculative reason, this is first of all the definition; secondly, the proposition; thirdly, the syllogism or argument. And since also the practical reason makes use of a syllogism in respect of the work to be done, as stated above (Q. XIII., A. 3; Q. LXXVI., A. 1) and as the Philosopher teaches (*Ethic.* vii); hence we find in the practical reason something that holds the same position in regard to operations, as, in the speculative intellect, the proposition holds in regard to conclusions. Suchlike universal propositions of the practical intellect that are directed to actions have the nature of law. And these propositions are sometimes under our actual consideration, while sometimes they are retained in the reason by means of a habit.

Reason has its power of moving from the will, as stated above (Q. XVII., A. 1): for it is due to the fact that one wills the end, that the reason issues its commands as regards things ordained to the end. But in order that the volition of what is commanded may have the nature of law, it needs

to be in accord with some rule of reason. And in this sense is to be understood the saying that the will of the sovereign has the force of law; otherwise the sovereign's will would savour of lawlessness rather than of law.

As stated above (A. 1), the law belongs to that which is a principle of human acts, because it is their rule and measure. Now as reason is a principle of human acts, so in reason itself there is something which is the principle in respect of all the rest: wherefore to this principle chiefly and mainly law must needs be referred.—Now the first principle in practical matters, which are the object of the practical reason, is the last end: and the last end of human life is bliss or happiness, as stated above (Q. II., A. 7; Q. III., A. 1). Consequently the law must needs regard principally the relationship to happiness. Moreover, since every part is ordained to the whole, as imperfect to perfect; and since one man is a part of the perfect community, the law must needs regard properly the relationship to universal happiness. Wherefore the Philosopher, in the above definition of legal matters mentions both happiness and the body politic: for he says (*Ethic.* v.) that we call those legal matters *just, which are adapted to produce and preserve happiness and its parts for the body politic*: since the state is a perfect community, as he says in *Polit.* i.

Now in every genus, that which belongs to it chiefly is the principle of the others, and the others belong to that genus in subordination to that thing: thus fire, which is chief among hot things, is the cause of heat in mixed bodies, and these are said to be hot in so far as they have a share of fire. Consequently, since the law is chiefly ordained to the common good, any other precept in regard to some individual work, must needs be devoid of the nature of a law, save

in so far as it regards the common good. Therefore every law is ordained to the common good.

A law, properly speaking, regards first and foremost the order to the common good. Now to order anything to the common good, belongs either to the whole people, or to someone who is the vicegerent of the whole people. And therefore the making of a law belongs either to the whole people or to a public personage who has care of the whole people: since in all other matters the directing of anything to the end concerns him to whom the end belongs.

As stated above (A. 1), a law is imposed on others by way of a rule and measure. Now a rule or measure is imposed by being applied to those who are to be ruled and measured by it. Wherefore, in order that a law obtain the binding force which is proper to a law, it must needs be applied to the men who have to be ruled by it. Such application is made by its being notified to them by promulgation. Wherefore promulgation is necessary for the law to obtain its force.

Thus from the four preceding articles, the definition of law may be gathered; and it is nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated.

The natural law is promulgated by the very fact that God instilled it into man's mind so as to be known by him naturally.

Those who are not present when a law is promulgated, are bound to observe the law, in so far as it is notified or can be notified to them by others, after it has been promulgated.

## THE KINDS OF LAW

We must now consider the various kinds of law: under which head there are six points of inquiry: (1) Whether there is an eternal law? (2) Whether there is a natural law? (3) Whether there is a human law? (4) Whether there is a Divine law? (5) Whether there is one Divine law, or several? (6) Whether there is a law of sin?

## FIRST ARTICLE

## Whether there is an Eternal Law?

*We proceed thus to the First Article:—*

*Objection* 1. It seems that there is no eternal law. Because every law is imposed on someone. But there was not someone from eternity on whom a law could be imposed: since God alone was from eternity. Therefore no law is eternal.

*Obj.* 2. Further, promulgation is essential to law. But promulgation could not be from eternity: because there was no one to whom it could be promulgated from eternity. Therefore no law can be eternal.

*Obj.* 3. Further, a law implies order to an end. But nothing ordained to an end is eternal: for the last end alone is eternal. Therefore no law is eternal.

*On the contrary*, Augustine says (*De Lib. Arb.* i.): *That Law which is the Supreme Reason cannot be understood to be otherwise than unchangeable and eternal.*

*I answer that*, As stated above (Q. XC., A. 1 *ad* 2; AA. 3, 4), a law is nothing else but a dictate of practical reason emanating from the ruler who governs a perfect community. Now it is evident, granted that the world is ruled by Divine Providence, as was stated in the First Part (Q. XXII., AA. 1, 2), that the whole community of the universe is governed by Divine Reason. Wherefore the very Idea of

the government of things in God the Ruler of the universe, has the nature of a law. And since the Divine Reason's conception of things is not subject to time but is eternal, according to Prov. viii. 23, therefore it is that this kind of law must be called eternal.

*Reply Obj.* 1. Those things that are not in themselves, exist with God, inasmuch as they are foreknown and pre-ordained by Him, according to Rom. iv. 17: *Who calls those things that are not, as those that are.* Accordingly the eternal concept of the Divine law bears the character of an eternal law, in so far as it is ordained by God to the government of things foreknown by Him.

*Reply Obj.* 2. Promulgation is made by word of mouth or in writing; and in both ways the eternal law is promulgated: because both the Divine Word and the writing of the Book of Life are eternal. But the promulgation cannot be from eternity on the part of the creature that hears or reads.

*Reply Obj.* 3. The law implies order to the end actively, in so far as it directs certain things to the end; but not passively,—that is to say, the law itself is not ordained to the end,—except accidentally, in a governor whose end is extrinsic to him, and to which end his law must needs be ordained. But the end of the Divine government is God Himself, and His law is not distinct from Himself. Wherefore the eternal law is not ordained to another end.

#### SECOND ARTICLE

### Whether there is in us a Natural Law?

*We proceed thus to the Second Article:—*

*Objection* 1. It seems that there is no natural law in us. Because man is governed sufficiently by the eternal law: for Augustine says (*De Lib. Arb.* i.) that *the eternal law is that by which it is right that all things should be most orderly.* But nature does not abound in superfluities as



neither does she fail in necessities. Therefore no law is natural to man.

*Obj. 2.* Further, by the law man is directed, in his acts, to the end, as stated above (Q. XC., A. 2). But the directing of human acts to their end is not a function of nature, as is the case in irrational creatures, which act for an end solely by their natural appetite; whereas man acts for an end by his reason and will. Therefore no law is natural to man.

*Obj. 3.* Further, the more a man is free, the less is he under the law. But man is freer than all the animals, on account of his free-will, with which he is endowed above all other animals. Since therefore other animals are not subject to a natural law, neither is man subject to a natural law.

*On the contrary,* The gloss on Rom. ii. 14: *When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law*, comments as follows: *Although they have no written law, yet they have the natural law, whereby each one knows, and is conscious of, what is good and what is evil.*

*I answer that,* As stated above (Q. XC., A. 1 ad 1), law, being a rule and measure, can be in a person in two ways: in one way, as in him that rules and measures; in another way, as in that which is ruled and measured, since a thing is ruled and measured, in so far as it partakes of the rule or measure. Wherefore, since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law, as was stated above (A. 1); it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends. Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason,

whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law. Hence the Psalmist after saying (Ps. iv. 6) : *Offer up the sacrifice of justice*, as though someone asked what the works of justice are, adds: *Many say, Who sheweth us good things?* in answer to which question he says: *The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us*: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation of the eternal law.

*Reply Obj.* 1. This argument would hold, if the natural law were something different from the eternal law: whereas it is nothing but a participation thereof, as stated above.

*Reply Obj.* 2. Every act of reason and will in us is based on that which is according to nature, as stated above (Q. X., A. 1): for every act of reasoning is based on principles that are known naturally, and every act of appetite in respect of the means is derived from the natural appetite in respect of the last end. Accordingly the first direction of our acts to their end must needs be in virtue of the natural law.

*Reply Obj.* 3. Even irrational animals partake in their own way of the Eternal Reason, just as the rational creature does. But because the rational creature partakes thereof in an intellectual and rational manner, therefore the participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is properly called a law, since a law is something pertaining to reason, as stated above (Q. XC., A. 1). Irrational creatures, however, do not partake thereof in a rational manner, wherefore there is no participation of the eternal law in them, except by way of similitude.

## Whether there is a Human Law?

As stated above (Q. XC., A. 1, *ad* 2), a law is a dictate of the practical reason. Now it is to be observed that the same procedure takes place in the practical and in the speculative reason: for each proceeds from principles to conclusions, as stated above (*ibid.*). Accordingly we conclude that *justas*, in the speculative reason, from naturally known indemonstrable principles, we draw the conclusions of the various sciences, the knowledge of which is not imparted to us by nature, but acquired by the efforts of reason, so too it is from the precepts of the natural law, as from general and indemonstrable principles, that the human reason needs to proceed to the more particular determination of certain matters. These particular determinations, devised by human reason, are called human laws, provided the other essential conditions of law be observed, as stated above (Q. XC., AA. 2, 3, 4). Wherefore Tully says in his *Rhetoric* (*De Invent. Rhet.* ii.) that *justice has its source in nature; thence certain things came into custom by reason of their utility; afterwards these things which emanated from nature and were approved by custom, were sanctioned by fear and reverence for the law.*

## Whether there was any need for a Divine Law?

Besides the natural and the human law it was necessary for the directing of human conduct to have a Divine law. And this is for four reasons. First, because it is by law that man is directed how to perform his proper acts in view of his last end. And indeed if man were ordained to no other end than that which is proportionate to his natural faculty, there would be no need for man to have any further direction on the part of his reason, besides the natural law and human law which is derived from it. But since man is or-

dained to an end of eternal happiness which is inproportionate to man's natural faculty, as stated above (Q. V., A. 5), therefore it was necessary that, besides the natural and the human law, man should be directed to his end by a law given by God.

Secondly, because, on account of the uncertainty of human judgment, especially on contingent and particular matters, different people form different judgments on human acts; whence also different and contrary laws result. In order, therefore, that man may know without any doubt what he ought to do and what he ought to avoid, it was necessary for man to be directed in his proper acts by a law given by God, for it is certain that such a law cannot err.

Thirdly, because man can make laws in those matters of which he is competent to judge. But man is not competent to judge of interior movements, that are hidden, but only of exterior acts which appear: and yet for the perfection of virtue it is necessary for man to conduct himself aright in both kinds of acts. Consequently human law could not sufficiently curb and direct interior acts; and it was necessary for this purpose that a Divine law should supervene.

Fourthly, because, as Augustine says (*De Lib. Arb.* i.), human law cannot punish or forbid all evil deeds: since while aiming at doing away with all evils, it would do away with many good things, and would hinder the advance of the common good, which is necessary for human intercourse. In order, therefore, that no evil might remain unforbidden and unpunished, it was necessary for the Divine law to supervene, whereby all sins are forbidden.

#### THE EFFECTS OF LAW

As stated above (Q. XC., A. 1 *ad* 2; AA. 3, 4), a law is nothing else than a dictate of reason in the ruler by whom his subjects are governed. Now the virtue of any subordinate thing consists in its being well subordinated to that

by which it is regulated: thus we see that the virtue of the irascible and concupiscible faculties consists in their being obedient to reason; and accordingly *the virtue of every subject consists in his being well subjected to his ruler*, as the Philosopher says (*Polit.* i.). But every law aims at being obeyed by those who are subject to it. Consequently it is evident that the proper effect of law is to lead its subjects to their proper virtue: and since virtue is *that which makes its subject good*, it follows that the proper effect of law is to make those to whom it is given, good, either simply or in some particular respect. For if the intention of the lawgiver is fixed on true good, which is the common good regulated according to Divine justice, it follows that the effect of the law is to make men good simply. If, however, the intention of the lawgiver is fixed on that which is not simply good, but useful or pleasurable to himself, or in opposition to Divine justice; then the law does not make men good simply, but in respect to that particular government. In this way good is found even in things that are bad of themselves: thus a man is called a good robber, because he works in a way that is adapted to his end.

Virtue is twofold, as explained above (Q. LXIII., A. 2), viz., acquired and infused. Now the fact of being accustomed to an action contributes to both, but in different ways; for it causes the acquired virtue; while it disposes to infused virtue, and preserves and fosters it when it already exists. And since law is given for the purpose of directing human acts; as far as human acts conduce to virtue so far does law make men good. Wherefore the Philosopher says in the second book of the *Politics* (*Ethic.* ii.) that *lawgivers make men good by habituating them to good works*.

It is not always through perfect goodness of virtue that one obeys the law, but sometimes it is through fear of punishment, and sometimes from the mere dictate of reason,

which is a beginning of virtue, as stated above (Q. LXIII., A. 1).

The goodness of any part is considered in comparison with the whole; hence Augustine says (*Conf.* iii.) that *unseemly is the part that harmonizes not with the whole*. Since then every man is a part of the state, it is impossible that a man be good, unless he be well proportionate to the common good: nor can the whole be well consistent unless its parts be proportionate to it. Consequently the common good of the state cannot flourish, unless the citizens be virtuous, at least those whose business it is to govern. But it is enough for the good of the community, that the other citizens be so far virtuous that they obey the commands of their rulers. Hence the Philosopher says (*Polit.* iii.) that *the virtue of a sovereign is the same as that of a good man, but the virtue of any common citizen is not the same as that of a good man*.

A tyrannical law, through not being according to reason, is not a law, absolutely speaking, but rather a perversion of law; and yet in so far as it is something in the nature of a law, it aims at the citizens being good. For all it has in the nature of a law consists in its being an ordinance made by a superior to his subjects, and aims at being obeyed by them, which is to make them good, not simply, but with respect to that particular government.

#### THE NATURAL LAW

As stated above (Q. XCI., A. 3), the precepts of the natural law are to the practical reason, what the first principles of demonstrations are to the speculative reason; because both are self-evident principles. Now a thing is said to be self-evident in two ways: first, in itself; secondly, in relation to us. Any proposition is said to be self-evident in itself, if its predicate is contained in the notion of the sub-

ject: although, to one who knows not the definition of the subject, it happens that such a proposition is not self-evident. For instance, this proposition, *Man is a rational being*, is, in its very nature, self-evident, since who says *man*, says a *rational being*: and yet to one who knows not what a man is, this proposition is not self-evident. Hence it is that, as Boethius says (*De Hebdom.*), certain axioms or propositions are universally self-evident to all; and such are those propositions whose terms are known to all, as, *Every whole is greater than its part*, and, *Things equal to one and the same are equal to one another*. But some propositions are self-evident only to the wise, who understand the meaning of the terms of such propositions: thus to one who understands that an angel is not a body, it is self-evident that an angel is not circumscriptively in a place: but this is not evident to the unlearned, for they cannot grasp it.

Now a certain order is to be found in those things that are apprehended universally. For that which, before aught else, falls under apprehension, is *being*, the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends. Wherefore the first indemonstrable principle is that *the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time*, which is based on the notion of *being* and *not-being*: and on this principle all others are based, as is stated in *Metaph.* iv. Now as *being* is the first thing that falls under the apprehension simply, so *good* is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an end under the aspect of good. Consequently the first principle in the practical reason is one founded on the notion of good, viz., that *good is that which all things seek after*. Hence this is the first precept of law, that *good is to be done and ensued, and evil is to be avoided*. All other precepts of the natural law are based upon this: so that whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man's good (or evil) belongs to the

precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided.

Since, however, good has the nature of an end, and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, *which nature has taught to all animals* (*Pandect. Just. I., Tit. I.*), such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth. Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.

We may speak of virtuous acts in two ways: first, under the aspect of virtuous; secondly, as such and such acts considered in their proper species. If then we speak of acts of



virtue, considered as virtuous, thus all virtuous acts belong to the natural law. For it has been stated (A. 2) that to the natural law belongs everything to which a man is inclined according to his nature. Now each thing is inclined naturally to an operation that is suitable to it according to its form: thus fire is inclined to give heat. Wherefore, since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue. Consequently, considered thus, all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law: since each one's reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously. But if we speak of virtuous acts, considered in themselves, i. e., in their proper species, thus not all virtuous acts are prescribed by the natural law: for many things are done virtuously, to which nature does not incline at first; but which, through the inquiry of reason, have been found by men to be conducive to well-living.

As stated above (AA. 2, 3), to the natural law belongs those things to which a man is inclined naturally: and among these it is proper to man to be inclined to act according to reason. Now the process of reason is from the common to the proper, as stated in *Phys.* i. The speculative reason, however, is differently situated in this matter, from the practical reason. For, since the speculative reason is busied chiefly with necessary things, which cannot be otherwise than they are, its proper conclusions, like the universal principles, contain the truth without fail. The practical reason, on the other hand, is busied with contingent matters, about which human actions are concerned: and consequently, although there is necessity in the general principles, the more we descend to matters of detail, the more frequently we encounter defects. Accordingly then in speculative mat-

ters truth is the same in all men, both as to principles and as to conclusions: although the truth is not known to all as regards the conclusions, but only as regards the principles which are called common notions. But in matters of action, truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail, but only as to the general principles: and where there is the same rectitude in matters of detail, it is not equally known to all.

It is therefore evident that, as regards the general principles whether of speculative or of practical reason, truth or rectitude is the same for all, and is equally known by all. As to the proper conclusions of the speculative reason, the truth is the same for all, but it is not equally known to all: thus it is true for all that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles, although it is not known to all. But as to the proper conclusions of the practical reason, neither is the truth or rectitude the same for all, nor, where it is the same, is it equally known by all. Thus it is right and true for all to act according to reason: and from this principle it follows as a proper conclusion, that goods entrusted to another should be restored to their owner. Now this is true for the majority of cases: but it may happen in a particular case that it would be injurious, and therefore unreasonable, to restore goods held in trust; for instance if they are claimed for the purpose of fighting against one's country. And this principle will be found to fail the more, according as we descend further into detail, *e. g.*, if one were to say that goods held in trust should be restored with such and such a guarantee, or in such and such a way; because the greater the number of conditions added, the greater the number of ways in which the principle may fail, so that it be not right to restore or not to restore.

Consequently, we must say that the natural law, as to general principles, is the same for all, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge. But as to certain matters of detail,

which are conclusions, as it were, of those general principles, it is the same for all in the majority of cases, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge; and yet in some few cases it may fail, both as to rectitude, by reason of certain obstacles (just as natures subject to generation and corruption fail in some few cases on account of some obstacle), and as to knowledge, since in some the reason is perverted by passion, or evil habit, or an evil disposition of nature; thus formerly, theft, although it is expressly contrary to the natural law, was not considered wrong among the Germans, as Julius Caesar relates (*De Bello Gall.*, vi.).

A change in the natural law may be understood in two ways. First, by way of addition. In this sense nothing hinders the natural law from being changed: since many things for the benefit of human life have been added over and above the natural law, both by the Divine law and by human laws.

Secondly, a change in the natural law may be understood by way of subtraction, so that what previously was according to the natural law, ceases to be so. In this sense, the natural law is altogether unchangeable in its first principles: but in its secondary principles, which, as we have said (A. 4), are certain detailed proximate conclusions drawn from the first principles, the natural law is not changed so that what it prescribes be not right in most cases. But it may be changed in some particular cases of rare occurrence, through some special causes hindering the observance of such precepts, as stated above (A. 4).

As stated above (AA. 4, 5), there belong to the natural law, first, certain most general precepts, that are known to

all; and secondly, certain secondary and more detailed precepts, which are, as it were, conclusions following closely from first principles. As to those general principles, the natural law, in the abstract, can nowise be blotted out from men's hearts. But it is blotted out in the case of a particular action, in so far as reason is hindered from applying the general principle to a particular point of practice, on account of concupiscence or some other passion, as stated above (Q. LXXVII., A. 2).—But as to the other, i. e., the secondary precepts, the natural law can be blotted out from the human heart, either by evil persuasions, just as in speculative matters errors occur in respect of necessary conclusions; or by vicious customs and corrupt habits, as among some men, theft, and even unnatural vices, as the Apostle states (Rom. i.), were not esteemed sinful.

#### HUMAN LAW

As stated above (Q. LXIII., A. 1; Q. XCIV., A. 3), man has a natural aptitude for virtue; but the perfection of virtue must be acquired by man by means of some kind of training. Thus we observe that man is helped by industry in his necessities, for instance, in food and clothing. Certain beginnings of these he has from nature, viz., his reason and his hands; but he has not the full complement, as other animals have, to whom nature has given sufficiency of clothing and food. Now it is difficult to see how man could suffice for himself in the matter of this training: since the perfection of virtue consists chiefly in withdrawing man from undue pleasures, to which above all man is inclined, and especially the young, who are more capable of being trained. Consequently a man needs to receive this training from another, whereby to arrive at the perfection of virtue. And as to those young people who are inclined to acts of virtue, by their good natural disposition, or by custom, or

rather by the gift of God, paternal training suffices, which is by admonitions. But since some are found to be depraved, and prone to vice, and not easily amenable to words, it was necessary for such to be restrained from evil by force and fear, in order that, at least, they might desist from evil-doing, and leave others in peace, and that they themselves, by being habituated in this way, might be brought to do willingly what hitherto they did from fear, and thus become virtuous. Now this kind of training, which compels through fear of punishment, is the discipline of laws. Therefore, in order that man might have peace and virtue, it was necessary for laws to be framed: for, as the Philosopher says (*Polit. i.*), *as man is the most noble of animals if he be perfect in virtue, so is he the lowest of all, if he be severed from law and righteousness*; because man can use his reason to devise means of satisfying his lusts and evil passions, which other animals are unable to do.

As Augustine says (*De Lib. Arb. i.*), *that which is not just seems to be no law at all*: wherefore the force of a law depends on the extent of its justice. Now in human affairs a thing is said to be just, from being right, according to the rule of reason. But the first rule of reason is the law of nature, as is clear from what has been stated above (*Q. XCI., A. 2 ad 2*). Consequently every human law has just so much of the nature of law, as it is derived from the law of nature. But if in any point it deflects from the law of nature, it is no longer a law but a perversion of law.

But it must be noted that something may be derived from the natural law in two ways: first, as a conclusion from premisses, secondly, by way of determination of certain generalities. The first way is like to that by which, in sciences, demonstrated conclusions are drawn from the

principles: while the second mode is likened to that whereby, in the arts, general forms are particularized as to details: thus the craftsman needs to determine the general form of a house to some particular shape. Some things are therefore derived from the general principles of the natural law, by way of conclusions; *e. g.*, that *one must not kill* may be derived as a conclusion from the principle that *one should do harm to no man*: while some are derived therefrom by way of determination; *e. g.*, the law of nature has it that the evil-doer should be punished; but that he be punished in this or that way, is a determination of the law of nature.

Accordingly both modes of derivation are found in the human law. But those things which are derived in the first way, are contained in human law not as emanating therefrom exclusively, but have some force from the natural law also. But those things which are derived in the second way, have no other force than that of human law.

Whenever a thing is for an end, its form must be determined proportionately to that end; as the form of a saw is such as to be suitable for cutting (*Phys.* ii.). Again, everything that is ruled and measured must have a form proportionate to its rule and measure. Now both these conditions are verified of human law: since it is both something ordained to an end; and is a rule or measure ruled or measured by a higher measure. And this higher measure is twofold, *viz.*, the Divine law and the natural law, as explained above (A. 2; Q. XCIII., A. 3). Now the end of human law is to be useful to man, as the Jurist states (*Pandect. Just.* i.). Wherefore Isidore in determining the nature of law, lays down, at first, three conditions; *viz.*, that it *foster religion*, inasmuch as it is proportionate to the Divine law; that it be *helpful to discipline*, inasmuch as it is proportionate to

the natural law; and that it *further the common weal*, inasmuch as it is proportionate to the utility of mankind.

All the other conditions mentioned by him are reduced to these three. For it is called virtuous because it fosters religion. And when he goes on to say that it should be *just, possible to nature, according to the customs of the country, adapted to place and time*, he implies that it should be helpful to discipline. For human discipline depends first on the order of reason, to which he refers by saying *just*:—secondly, it depends on the ability of the agent; because discipline should be adapted to each one according to his ability, taking also into account the ability of nature (for the same burdens should be not laid on children as on adults); and should be according to human customs; since man cannot live alone in society, paying no heed to others:—thirdly, it depends on certain circumstances, in respect of which he says, *adapted to place and time*.—The remaining words, *necessary, useful*, etc., mean that law should further the common weal: so that *necessity* refers to the removal of evils; *usefulness* to the attainment of good; *clearness of expression*, to the need of preventing any harm ensuing from the law itself.—And since, as stated above (Q. XC., A. 2), law is ordained to the common good, this is expressed in the last part of the description.

## CHAPTER IX

### THOMAS HOBBES

(1588-1679)

BECAUSE of their far-reaching effects on ethics we must not forget, though we must pass in silence, the history of the Italian Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the birth of empirical science, which together mark the beginnings of the modern period. We now find ourselves in the England of the seventeenth century, a land bleeding through civil wars, half-heartedly rejoicing in the ruins of a too rigid scholasticism, neither Protestant nor Catholic and as yet unable to make full use of the new science. English philosophical writing, compared with the production of other nations, shows a disproportionately large interest in ethical problems. The course of English history, including as it does the Presbyterian insistence on freedom of conscience, the American Revolution with its views of political right and wrong, the Englishman's own desire for self-government, brings to the front the need of speculation regarding the ultimate basis of morality. Perhaps the English people has taken its moral issues more seriously than other nations. With the names of Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, before us, we cannot, however, deny considerable moral speculation on the Continent; but for us, with an English tradition behind us, the history of English ethics is more to the point. The first great figure in this development lived in the midst of the struggle between the old and new orders and a brief paragraph on these conditions is apposite.

Charles I, who ascended the throne in 1625, in an attempt



to establish a monarchy as absolute as that of his contemporary Louis XIV, found it impossible to force Parliament to levy taxes sufficient for a large standing army. When so frustrated he would dissolve one Parliament and call another only to be checked again. Then refusing to convene Parliament for a period of eleven years, 1629-1640, he practically achieved absolute power, but without his desired army. Further, the purely political struggle was complicated by religious vexations. While the Anglican Church was reverting to Romanism, the dissenting Puritans were tending exactly to the opposite extreme. These latter were persecuted until many left the country. But Charles further tried to force the Scotch Presbyterians to conform to Anglo-Catholicism and they rebelled. This development made an army imperative, so Charles called Parliament in April 1640. At first he seemed assured of success. But the Scots encountered little resistance in Charles' armies, many of his soldiers having been drafted against their wills, and defeat confronted him. In November 1640 the "Long Parliament" convened. It swept away Charles' political and religious inquisitions, abolished the tortures inflicted on dissenters and set the captives free.

The struggle then shifting from the battle-field to Parliament gave opportunity for plots, intrigues, and counter-plots. The Cavaliers supported the King, the Round Heads or Whigs fought for religious liberty and a more democratic government. The King now had a small but well trained army, the Whigs had the power of taxation but no leaders and no soldiers. The Protestant cause looked hopeless. Then Charles plotted once too often. England armed against him overnight. But the leaderless man-power would have been useless against the army, had there not appeared the gigantic figure of Oliver Cromwell who led them to victory.

As in a previous footnote, the student is again advised to

familiarize himself with this period of history, not merely because it will aid the study of ethics but also because here, as in the French Revolution and the American Civil War, we are witnessing the birth of a nation.

The intellectual situation in this century is quite as interesting as the political. Four centuries before, in the lifetime of the greatest scholastic, Thomas Aquinas, the roots of this new intellectual development are found hidden in prison. To insure secrecy and safety, an aim hardly accomplished, Roger Bacon wrote in cipher the peculiar details of the beginnings of empirical science.<sup>1</sup> But Roger Bacon lived much too soon. Induction based on experimentation was just becoming popular in the age we are now studying. Francis Bacon had fostered the new method in England; Galileo we find at the same time hard at work in Italy; Kepler also, and Copernicus in the not too distant past. Harvey had just discovered the circulation of the blood, 1616; Descartes, Gassendi, and Mersenne were at that very moment pushing their investigations with the utmost vigor. Even the older generation of the present day, whose life stretches between oil lamps and television, buggy-rides and aviation, has not witnessed a more rapid and surprising progress. Einstein to-day can be taken far more complacently than ever they could take Copernicus. Small wonder the world was upside down.

In the sphere of ethics there is a proportionate complexity. Instead of the deductive method of the scholastics, supposed to have little or no connection with actual life, scientific experimentation was proposed as a substitute with serious implications to be mentioned presently. The political conditions emphasized the interrelationship of ethics and jurisprudence. If a world which theoretically at least if

<sup>1</sup> For one of the most unbelievable achievements of pure genius, read *The Cipher of Roger Bacon*, Newbold and Kent, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928.

not always practically is governed absolutely by the harmonious working of pope and emperor suddenly finds the absolute authorities broken in fact and the very theory discarded, the individual is personally faced with the problem, to which power shall I pledge allegiance, if any, and under what conditions may I renounce my obligations? With the Scotch army sweeping down from the north and the King advancing from the south, or, with Cromwell here and Charles there, the man between discovers the necessity of answering such questions. But the practical necessity of quick decision does not conduce to an impartial and thorough philosophic investigation. These questions, actually involving theories of government, sociology, morality, a not over-conscientious person will answer by a shrewd guess concerning the outcome of the immediate battle. To justify one's decision, however, leisure for contemplation must be found. And in this turbulent century, one man at least was sufficiently diplomatic and frequently enough a fugitive to escape major interruptions in his contemplative activity.

It is unnecessary to follow all the personal history of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). By disposition he belonged to the aristocratic party and when he first published his philosophic views they pleased the King because they justified the government in power. But when another government came to power, Hobbes' philosophy, we cannot actually say his sympathies, automatically changed sides. Some of his contemporaries acrimoniously charged him with duplicity but with the advantage of present-day perspective he seems to have been disloyal only when avoidance of martyrdom required it. Another source of inconvenience was his opponents' mathematical abilities. Not having discovered geometry until forty years of age, his insistence that the circle could be squared, was conducive neither to friendship nor respect. Add to this a too highly developed conceit, occasionally producing an incivility which among

other things changed Descartes from a possible friend to a scornful enemy and we can easily imagine the petty inconveniences which might and did result.

Some of his unguarded statements have remained, to the first of which some who have read a preceding chapter may be inclined to agree. "Aristotle was the worst teacher that ever was, the worst politician and ethick." "Had I studied books as much as other men, I had known no more than other men." He calls Peter Lombard and Duns Scotus, two famous scholastics whose system he opposes, "two of the most egregious blockheads in the world."

The effect of such language, applied to contemporaries as well as to those long antecedent, is characteristically stated by one whose work on Hobbes is especially recommended to the particularly interested student.<sup>2</sup>

"The moral is, I suppose, that a man ought to read Euclid before he is forty. He will assimilate the principles better, and he will also be made aware of the danger of mistaking blunders for original discoveries. That is an error of which he will be cured by examiners. Anyhow, besides wasting his energy, Hobbes had put himself in a curiously uncomfortable position by the time of the Restoration. Intellectual audacity combines awkwardly with personal timidity. The poor old gentleman, aged seventy-two, whose great aim was to keep out of harm's way, had stirred up an amazing mass of antipathies. His political absolutism was hateful to constitutionalists like Clarendon as well as to the more popular politicians: to the two parties, that is, which were about to become tories and whigs. Anglican bishops and non-conformist divines agreed that he was an atheist, and, what was to some almost as bad, a hater of all ecclesiastical authority. His political views might suit the courtiers, but no one could be more hostile to their leanings

<sup>2</sup> Stephen, Sir Leslie, *Hobbes*, pp. 56, 57.

to Rome. Political absolutism and religious scepticism made a creed which could not be openly avowed, though it might and did excite some tacit sympathy. He had, however, spoken with a certain authority as a representative of science. Now the scientific and philosophical world had ostracised him. They had pronounced him to be a charlatan. A man who could make such a mess of squaring the circle was presumably a paradox-monger in philosophy. His opponents would taunt him with a failure admitted by every one but himself. It is true that popular opinion looks upon philosophers with a dash of amused contempt. Like Shakespeare's fools they are allowed a certain license. Their queer opinions, even if atrocious, are so far removed from practical business as to be harmless and rather amusing playthings. Personally Hobbes was generally agreeable; and so venerable in appearance that one would prefer to leave him in quiet. He had some anxious moments, but on the whole was tolerated."

It is now time to outline the more fundamental aspects of Hobbes' philosophy on which he based his moral, or as his opponents had it, his immoral theory. Whatever degree of disapprobation one places on Hobbes, he cannot deny him a remarkable degree of consistency. As a young man Hobbes became possessed of a few major ideas, to a thorough elaboration of which he devoted his life; and if he be reproached as one-sided, obstinate and logical to a fault, his fault is at least the finest possible method of testing his initial assumptions. In spite of his espousal of the new inductive method, he was governed by these assumptions, and so attached to general principles was he, that it is said he criticized the Royal Society of London for paying so much more attention to minute experiences than to fundamental postulates. Living between two ages he is a curious mixture of the deduction of the old and the induction of the new.

For the sake of convenience Hobbes' system may be divided into three sections: the philosophy of nature or physics; the philosophy of man or psychology; and ethics and politics.

His conception of the universe is thoroughly materialistic. All forms of life in all its aspects are but complicated relationships of material particles in motion. The most brilliant philosophy excogitated by the subtlest mind is the motion of parts of the brain. Not quite a materialist, Descartes, whose relation to Hobbes has been mentioned, excepted man alone from the reign of mechanical law in a material universe. Animals are soulless machines but not man. This, Hobbes rightly saw, was inconsistent. Going the whole way, therefore, he declared man, too, to be a product of mechanical forces, an integral part of the universe, determined to act just so. This involved Hobbes in theological questions of determinism and free will which recall to us the Fate of the Stoics.

Materialism decides Hobbes' psychological attitude. (Pleasure, he says, is a motion of parts of the body which helps vital action; pain, a motion which lowers vitality. Each man's actions are naturally directed to preserving himself or, if he be in no special danger, to the heightening of life which means the procuring of pleasure. All actions have this end. We desire longer life and more pleasure, and having satisfied the present particular desire, we desire something else as another means to the same end. Never will one reach the state of desiring nothing. Very obvious is the fact that the more man's desires are satisfied the more he desires. To desire nothing is, as Callicles before him had said, the life of a stone or a corpse.

All this makes man essentially self-seeking. No individual cares anything for the good or pleasure of another except in so far as the condition of the other affects himself. And on this egoistic basis Hobbes explains all the emotions ordinarily

called altruistic. "Pity is imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity." "The passion of laughter proceedeth from the sudden imagination of our own odds and eminency; for what is else the recommending of ourselves to our own good opinion by the comparison of another man's inferiority or absurdity." These definitions have been the butt of considerable ridicule. Philosophers have pointed out their inadequacy, and respectable people generally, regarded them as evincing extraordinary depravity. Sir Leslie Stephen says,<sup>3</sup> "In our eyes it (Hobbes' egoism) may be redeemed by the charming simplicity and utter unconsciousness of offence with which he propounds his atrocious theories. He becomes unintentionally humorous."

But Hobbes had become disgusted with previous ethical speculation. It had been too clumsy, too unscientific. And though Hobbes was more deductive in temper than perhaps he would have cared to admit, he takes this opportunity to insist on induction and observation. If ethical theory, like physics, is to be grounded in experience, we must observe what men actually desire. It is this, however, which entails the serious consequences hinted at as a result of scientific experimentation. The question arises whether ethics should be not essentially a normative but merely a descriptive science. If ethics limits itself to a description of what men as a matter of fact do, is it justified in omitting all account of what men don't do but ought to? And if ethics must be normative, the further problem presents itself, how may one proceed from what a man does to what he ought to do? Hobbes by no means dissolves the difficulty. It may even seem that he has left no room for the commonly acknowledged virtues of justice, loyalty, honesty or duties in general.

More perplexing does the paradox become when he describes the natural state of man as that of a war of each

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

against all. Each man desires to control all possible means to life and pleasure, and the desires conflict. Though the state of war ensuing is perfectly natural in that everyone is free from governmental restraint, it is perfectly intolerable. None knows at what moment his goods may be stolen or his life taken. And while he is entirely free, in so far as his strength and wit enable him, to pursue his aims, no condition could be less propitious for their achievement. In such a war justice and injustice in their accepted meanings, right and wrong as moral characteristics of action, do not exist. Might alone makes right. And since all men are fairly equal in strength and cunning the result can only duplicate that of the Kilkenny cats. To this state of insecurity and anarchy Hobbes saw England on its way. Only by demonstrating the necessity of stable government could Hobbes contribute to his country's welfare. So he imagined in the past what he saw in the future, the intolerable conflict and what men would be forced to do about it.

Since the war of each against all leads to the certain defeat of their aims, men will, simply because they are selfish, make rules of living and agree to abide by the rules. Through unfortunate experience man is taught the need of coöperation. At this point a very practical consideration forces itself upon the one who is about to make such a social contract. These rules are to become morality; they will, by stating our duties and obligations to other men, limit our freedom. But obviously, being framed, as they are, by self-seeking men, it would be suicidal to obey them unless guaranteed that everyone else would obey them.

The agreement must be made permanently binding, else mankind, as is now the case in England, will be in danger of slipping back into the unbearable state of nature. Now there is one means only by which morality can be enforced upon all men. Everyone must surrender all his rights to one



person, the king, who thereby becomes absolute monarch. From now on no one has the right to rebel against the established government, because the king, holder of all rights, dispenses to each subject what he thinks fit and of course never permits any to rebel. His laws, then, constitute morality.

Even so, after the state has been formed, its laws of justice, honesty, chastity in effect, the citizens are no less selfish in obeying the king than they were in the state of nature. They are, however, much more efficiently selfish. Nor is the state other than self-seeking. When it honors a man, it is either bidding for his future services, or, in the case of paying tribute to a fallen soldier, trying to stimulate similar conduct in others.

The mention of a social contract by which man forms a government for his preservation reminds us of a French philosopher of the next century, J. J. Rousseau. The student will do well to learn here, and apply it in all other reading, that similarity of phraseology is not equivalent to similarity of meaning. Rousseau also had a state of nature, but, though equally imaginary, or momentary if ever actual, it was a happy condition. Civilization for Rousseau, corrupts man, and government is necessary to stay the corruption and alleviate the misery. Further, the government into which men enter by social contract is not the absolute monarchy of Hobbes. France was beginning to experience the consequences of such a government and Rousseau saw the deluge approaching.

Rousseau serves, at this point, not only to direct attention to the possibility of comparing and contrasting two thinkers so as to extend one's ethical horizon beyond England; but as well to illustrate the interdependency of ethics and politics. Those interested in this latter problem must review Plato and Aristotle and anticipate Bentham.

THE LEVIATHAN <sup>4</sup>

OF THE NATURALL CONDITION OF MANKIND, AS CONCERNING  
THEIR FELICITY, AND MISERY <sup>5</sup>

Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger with himselfe.

And as to the faculties of the mind (setting aside the arts grounded upon words, and especially that skill of proceeding upon generall, and infallible rules, called Science; which very few have, and but in few things; as being not a native faculty, born with us; nor attained, (as Prudence,) while we look after somewhat els,) I find yet a greater equality amongst men, than that of strength. For Prudence, is but Experience; which equall time, equally bestowes on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves unto. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible, is but a vain conceit of ones owne wisdom which almost all men think they have in a greater degree, than the Vulgar; that is, than all men but themselves, and a few others, whom by Fame, or for concurring with themselves, they approve. For such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; Yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves: For they see their own wit at hand, and other men's at a distance. But this proveth

<sup>4</sup> The following selections are all taken from *The Leviathan*.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter XIII.

rather that men are in that point equall, than unequall. For there is not ordinarily a greater signe of the equall distribution of anything, than that every man is contented with his share.

From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our Ends. And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which neverthesse they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their End, (which is principally their owne conservation, and sometimes their delectation only,) endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to passe, that where an Invader hath no more to feare, than an other man's single power; if one plant, sow, build, or possesse a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dipossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labour, but also of his life, or liberty. And the Invader again is in the like danger of another.

And from this diffidence of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himselfe, so reasonable, as Anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: And this is no more than his own conservation requireth, and is generally allowed. Also because there be some, that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defence, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a mans conservation, it ought to be allowed him.

Againe, men have no pleasure, (but on the contrary a great deale of grieve) in keeping company, where there is

no power able to over-awe them all. For every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himselfe. And upon all signes of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavours, as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other,) to extort a greater value from his contemnners, by damage; and from others by the example.

So that in the nature of man, we find three principall causes of quarrell. First, Competition; Secondly, Diffidence; Thirdly, Glory.

The first, maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation. The first use Violence, to make themselves Masters of other mens persons, wives, children, and cattell; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other signe of undervalue, either direct in their Persons, or by reflexion in their Kindred, their Friends, their Nation, their Profession or their Name.

Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man. For Warre, consisteth not in Battell onely, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known: and therefore the notion of *Time* is to be considered in the nature of Warre; as it is in the nature of Weather. For as the nature of Foule weather, lyeth not in a showre or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many dayes together; So in the nature of War, consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is Peace.

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is con-

sequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention shall furnish them withall. In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth, no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.

It may seem strange to some man, that has not well weighed these things; that Nature should thus dissociate, and render men apt to invade, and destroy one another: and he may therefore, not trusting to this Inference, made from the Passions, desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by Experience. Let him therefore consider with himselfe, when taking a journey, he armes himselfe, and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his dores; when even in his house he locks his chests; and this when he knowes there bee Lawes, and publike Officers, armed, to revenge all injuries shall bee done him; what opinion he has of his fellow subjects, when he rides armed; of his fellow Citizens, when he locks his dores; and of his children, and servants, when he locks his chests. Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse mans nature in it. The Desires, and other Passions of man, are in themselves no Sin. No more are the Actions, that proceed from those Passions, till they know a Law that forbids them: which till Lawes be made they cannot know: nor can any Law be made, till they have agreed upon the Person that shall make it.

It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a

time, nor condition of warre as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world: but there are many places, where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of *America*, except the government of small Families, the concord whereof dependeth on naturall lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before. Howsoever, it may be perceived what manner of life there would be, where there were no common Power to feare; by the manner of life, which man that have formerly lived under a peacefull government, use to degenerate into, a civill Warre.

But though there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet in all times, Kings, and Persons of Sovereigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their Forts, Garrisons, and Guns, upon the Frontiers of their Kingdomes; and continuall Spyes upon their neighbours; which is a posture of War. But because they uphold thereby, the Industry of their Subjects; there does not follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the Liberty of particular men.

To this warre of every man against every man, this also is consequent: that nothing can be Unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place. Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice. Force, and Fraud, are in warre the two Cardinal vertues. Justice, and Injustice are none of the Faculties neither of the Body, nor Mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his Senses, and Passions. They are Qualities, that relate to men in Society, not in Solitude. It is consequent also to the same condition, that there be no Propriety, no Dominion, no *Mine* and *Thine* distinct; but onely that to be every

mans, that he can get; and for so long, as he can keep it. And this much for the ill condition, which man by meer Nature is actually placed in; though with a possibility to come out of it, consisting partly in the Passions, partly in his Reason.

The Passions that encline men to Peace, are Feare of Death; Desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a Hope by their Industry to obtain them. And Reason suggesteth convenient Articles of Peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These Articles, are they, which otherwise are called the Lawes of Nature: whereof I shall speak more particularly, in the two following Chapters.

OF THE FIRST AND SECOND NATURALL LAWES, AND OF  
CONTRACTS <sup>6</sup>

The Right of Nature, which Writers commonly call *Jus Naturale*, is the Liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himselfe, for the preservation of his own Nature; that is to say, of his own Life; and consequently, of doing any thing, which in his own judgement, and Reason, hee shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto.

By Liberty, is understood, according to the proper signification of the word, the absence of externall Impediments: which Impediments, may oft take away part of a mans power to do what hee would; but cannot hinder him from using the power left him, according as his judgement, and reason shall dictate to him.

A Law of Nature, (*Lex Naturalis*) is a Precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved. For though they that speak of this subject, use to confound *Jus*, and

<sup>6</sup> Chapter XIV.

*Lex, Right and Law*; yet they ought to be distinguished; because Right, consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear; Whereas Law, determineth, and bindeth to one of them: so that Law, and Right, differ as much, as Obligation, and Liberty; which in one and the same matter are inconsistent.

And because the condition of Man, (as hath been declared in the precedent Chapter) is a condition of Warre of every one against every one; in which case every one is governed by his own Reason; and there is nothing he can make use of that may not be a help unto him, in preserving his life against his enemies; It followeth, that in such a condition, every man has a Right to every thing; even to one anothers body. And therefore, as long as this naturall Right of every man to every thing endureth, there can be no security to any man, (how strong or wise soever he be,) of living out the time, which Nature ordinarily alloweth men to live. And consequently it is a precept, or generall rule of Reason, *That every man, ought to endeavour Peace, as farre as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warre.* The first branch of which Rule, containeth the first, and Fundamentall Law of Nature; which is, *to seek Peace, and follow it.* The Second, the summe of the Right of Nature; which is, *By all means we can, to defend our selves.*

From this Fundamentall Law of Nature, by which men are commanded to endeavour Peace, is derived this second Law; *That a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down his right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe.* For as long as every man holdeth this Right, of doing any thing he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of Warre. But if other



men will not lay down their Right, as well as he; then there is no Reason for any one, to devest himselfe of his: For that were to expose himselfe to Prey, (which no man is bound to) rather than to dispose himselfe to Peace. This is that Law of the Gospel; *Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them.* And that Law of all men, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris.*

OF OTHER LAWES OF NATURE<sup>7</sup>

From that law of Nature, by which we are obliged to trans-ferre to another, such Rights, as being retained, hinder the peace of Mankind, there followeth a Third; which is this, *That men performe their Covenants made:* without which, Covenants are in vain, and but Empty words; and the Right of all men to all things remaining, wee are still in the condition of Warre.

And in this law of Nature, consisteth the Fountain and Originall of Justice. For where no Covenant hath preceded, there hath no Right been transferred, and every man has right to every thing; and consequently, no action can be Unjust. But when a Covenant is made, then to break it is *Unjust:* And the definition of Injustice, is no other than *the not Performance of Covenant.* And whatsoever is not Unjust, is *Just.*

But because Covenants of mutuall trust, where there is a feare of not performance on either part, (as hath been said in the former Chapter,) are invalid; though the Originall of Justice be the making of Covenants; yet Injustice actually there can be none, till the cause of such feare be taken away; which while men are in the naturall condition of Warre, cannot be done. Therefore before the names of Just, and Unjust can have place, there must be some coer-

<sup>7</sup> Chapter XV.

ceive Power, to compell men equally to the performance of their Covenants, by the terrour of some punishment, greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their Covenant; and to make good that Propriety, which by mutuall Contract men acquire, in recompence of the universall Right they abandon: and such power there is none before the erection of a Common-wealth. And this is also to be gathered out of the ordinary definition of Justice in the Schooles: For they say, that *Justice is the constant Will of giving to every men his own*. And therefore where there is no *Own*, that is, no Propriety, there is no Injustice; and where there is no coerceive Power erected, that is, where there is no Common-wealth, there is no Propriety; all men having Right to all things: Therefore where there is no Common-wealth, there nothing is Unjust. So that the nature of Justice, consisteth in keeping of valid Covenants: but the Validity of Covenants begins not but with the Constitution of Civill Power, sufficient to compell men to keep them: And then it is also that Propriety begins.

As Justice dependeth on Antecedent Covenant; so does Gratitude depend on Antecedent Grace; that is to say, Antecedent-Free-Gift: and is the fourth Law of Nature; which may be conceived in this Forme, *That a man which receiveth Benefit from another of meer Grace, Endeavour that he which giveth it, have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will*. For no man giveth, but with intention of Good to himselfe; because Gift is Voluntary; and of all Voluntary Acts, the Object is to every man his own Good; of which if men see they shall be frustrated, there will be no beginning of benevolence, or trust; nor consequently of mutuall help; nor of reconciliation of one man to another; and therefore they are to remain still in the condition of *War*; which is contrary to the first and Fundamentall Law of Nature, which commandeth men to *Seek Peace*. The breach of this Law, is called *Ingratitude*; and hath the same

relation to Grace, that Injustice hath to Obligation by Covenant.

A fifth Law of Nature, is Compleasance; that is to say, *That every man strive to accommodate himselfe to the rest.* For the understanding whereof, we may consider, that there is in mens aptnesse to Society, a diversity of Nature, rising from their diversity of Affections; not unlike to that we see in stones brought together for building of an Ædifice. For as that stone which by the asperity, and irregularity of Figure, takes more room from others, than it selfe fills; and for the hardnesse, cannot be easily made plain, and thereby hindereth the building, is by the builders cast away as unprofitable, and troublesome: so also, a man that by asperity of Nature, will strive to retain those things which to himselfe are superfluous, and to others necessary; and for the stubbornness of his Passions, cannot be corrected, is to be left, or cast out of Society, as combersome thereunto. For seeing every man, not onely by Right, but also by necessity of Nature, is supposed to endeavour all he can, to obtain that which is necessary for his conservation; He that shall oppose himselfe against it, for things superfluous, is guilty of the warre that thereupon is to follow; and therefore doth that, which is contrary to the fundamentall Law of Nature, which commandeth *to seek Peace.* The observers of this Law, may be called Sociable, (the Latines call them *Commodi*;) The contrary, *Stubborn, Insociable, Froward, Intractable.*

A sixth Law of Nature, is this, *That upon caution of the Future time, a man ought to pardon the offences past of them that repenting, desire it.* For Pardon, is nothing but granting of Peace; which though granted to them that persevere in their hostility, be not Peace, but Feare; yet not granted to them that give caution of the Future time, is signe of an aversion to Peace; and therefore contrary to the Law of Nature.

## PART II—OF COMMONWEALTH

OF THE CAUSES, GENERATION, AND DEFINITION OF A  
COMMON-WEALTH <sup>8</sup>

The finall Cause, End, or Designe of men, (who naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others,) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, (in which wee see them live in Common-wealths,) is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of Warre, which is necessarily consequent (as hath been shewn) to the naturall Passions of men, when there is no visible Power to keep them in awe, and tye them by feare of punishment to the performance of their Covenants, and observation of those Lawes of Nature set down in the fourteenth and fifteenth Chapters.

For the Lawes of Nature (as *Justice, Equity, Modesty, Mercy*, and (in summe) *doing to others, as wee would be done to,*) of themselves, without the terroure of some Power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our naturall Passions, that carry us to Partiality, Pride, Revenge, and the like. And Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all. Therefore notwithstanding the Lawes of Nature, (which every one hath then kept, when he has the will to keep them, when he can do it safely,) if there be no Power erected, or not great enough for our security; every man will, and may lawfully rely on his own strength and art, for caution against all other men. And in all places, where men have lived by small Families, to robbe and spoyle one another, has been a Trade, and so farre from being reputed against the Law of Nature, that the greater spoyles they gained, the greater was their honour; and men observed no other Lawes therein, but the Lawes of Honour; that is, to abstain from

<sup>8</sup> Chapter XVII. .

cruelty, leaving to men their lives, and instruments of husbandry. And as small Familyes did then; so now do Cities and Kingdomes, which are but greater Families (for their own security) enlarge their Dominions, upon all pretences of danger, and fear of Invasion, or assistance that may be given to Invaders, endeavour as much as they can, to subdue, or weaken their neighbours, by open force, and secret arts, for want of other Caution, justly; and are remembered for it in after ages with honour.

Nor is it the joyning together of a small number of men, that gives them this security; because in small numbers, small additions on the one side or the other, make the advantages of strength so great, as is sufficient to carry the Victory; and therefore gives encouragement to an Invasion. The Multitude sufficient to confide in for our Security, is not determined by any certain number, but by comparison with the Enemy we feare; and is then sufficient, when the odds of the Enemy is not of so visible and conspicuous moment, to determine the event of warre, as to move him to attempt.

And be there never so great a Multitude; yet if their actions be directed according to their particular judgements, and particular appetites, they can expect thereby no defence, nor protection, neither against a common enemy, nor against the injuries of one another. For being distracted in opinions concerning the best use and application of their strength, they do not help, but hinder one another; and reduce their strength by mutuall opposition to nothing: whereby they are easily, not onely subdued by a very few that agree together; but also when there is no common enemy, they make warre upon each other, for their particular interests. For if we could suppose a great Multitude of men to consent in the observation of Justice, and other Lawes of Nature, without a common Power to keep them all in awe; we might as well suppose all Man-kind to do the

same; and then there neither would be, nor need to be any Civill Government, or Common-wealth at all; because there would be Peace without subjection.

Nor is it enough for the security, which men desire should last all the time of their life, that they be governed, and directed by one judgement, for a limited time; as in one Bat-tel, or one Warre. For though they obtain a Victory by their unanimous endeavour against a forraign enemy; yet afterwards, when either they have no common enemy, or he that by one part is held for an enemy, is by another part held for a friend, they must needs by the difference of their interests dissolve, and fall again into a Warre amongst themselves.

The only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of Forraigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their owne industrie, and by the fruites of the Earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is, to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one Man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person; and every one to owne, and acknowledge himselfe to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person, shall Act, or cause to be Acted, in those things which concerne the Common Peace and Safetie; and therein to submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgements, to his Judgment. This is more than Consent or Concord; it is a reall Unitie of them all, in one and the same Person, made by Covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, *I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner.* This done, the Multitude

so united in one Person, is called a Common-wealth, in latine Civitas. This is the Generation of that great Leviathan, or rather (to speake more reverently) of that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortall God*, our peace and defence. For by this Authoritie, given him by every particular man in the Common-Wealth, he hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by terrour thereof, he is inabled to forme the wills of them all, to Peace at home, and mutuall ayd against their enemies abroad. And in him consisteth the Essence of the Common-wealth; which (to define it,) is *One Person, of whose Acts a great Multitude, by mutuall Covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the Author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their Peace and Common Defence.*

And he that carryeth this Person, is called Sovereaigne, and said to have *Sovereaigne Power*; and every one besides, his Subject.

The attaining to this Sovereaigne Power, is by two wayes. One, by Naturall force; as when a man maketh his children, to submit themselves, and their children to his government, as being able to destroy them if they refuse; or by Warre subdueth his enemies to his will, giving them their lives on that condition. The other, is when men agree amongst themselves, to submit to some Man, or Assembly of men, voluntarily, on confidence to be protected by him against all others. This later, may be called a Politicall Common-wealth, or Common-wealth by *Institution*; and the former, a Common-wealth by *Acquisition*. And first, I shall speak of a Common-wealth by Institution.

#### OF THE RIGHTS OF SOVERAIGNES BY INSTITUTIONS<sup>9</sup>

A *Common-wealth* is said to be *Instituted*, when a *Multitude* of men do Agree, and *Covenant, every one, with every*

<sup>9</sup> Chapter XVIII.

*one*, that to whatsoever *Man*, or *Assembly of Men*, shall be given by the major part, the *Right to Present* the Person of them all, (that is to say, to be their *Representative*;) every one, as well he that *Voted for it*, as he that *Voted against it*, shall *Authorise* all the Actions and Judgements, of that Man, or Assembly of men, in the same manner, as if they were his own, to the end, to live peaceably amongst themselves, and be protected against other men.

From this Institution of a Common-wealth are derived all the *Rights* and *Faculties* of him, or them, on whom the Sovereigne Power is conferred by the consent of the People assembled.

First, because they Covenant, it is to be understood, they are not obliged by former Covenant to any thing repugnant hereunto. And Consequently they that have already Instituted a Common-wealth, being thereby bound by Covenant, to own the Actions, and Judgements of one, cannot lawfully make a new Covenant, amongst themselves, to be obedient to any other, in any thing whatsoever, without his permission. And therefore, they that are subjects to a Monarch, cannot without his leave cast off Monarchy, and return to the confusion of a disunited Multitude; nor transferre their Person from him that beareth it, to another Man, or other Assembly of men: for they are bound, every man to every man, to Own, and be reputed Author of all, that he that already is their Sovereigne, shall do, and judge fit to be done: so that any one man dissenting all the rest should break their Covenant made to that man, which is injustice: and they have also every man given the Sovereignty to him that beareth their Person; and therefore if they depose him, they take from him that which is his own, and so again it is injustice. Besides, if he that attempteth to depose his Sovereign, be killed, or punished by him for such attempt, he is author of his own punishment, as being by the Institution, Author of all his Sovereign shall do:



And because it is injustice for a man to do any thing, for which he may be punished by his own authority, he is also upon that title, unjust. And whereas some men have pretended for their disobedience to their Sovereign, a new Covenant, made, not with men, but with God; this also is unjust: for there is no Covenant with God, but by mediation of some body that representeth Gods Person; which none doth but Gods Lieutenant, who hath the Sovereignty under God. But this pretence of Covenant with God, is so evident a lye, even in the pretenders own consciences, that it is not onely an act of an unjust, but also of a vile, and unmanly disposition.

Secondly, Because the Right of bearing the Person of them all, is given to him they make Sovereigne, by Covenant onely of one to another, and not of him to any of them; there can happen no breach of Covenant on the part of the Sovereigne; and consequently none of his Subjects, by any pretence of forfeiture, can be freed from his Subjection. That he which is made Sovereigne maketh no Covenant with his Subjects beforehand, is manifest; because either he must make it with the whole multitude, as one party to the Covenant; or he must make a severall Covenant with every man. With the whole, as one party, it is impossible; because as yet they are not one Person: and if he make so many severall Covenants as there be men, those Covenants after he hath the Sovereignty are voyd, because what act soever can be pretended by any one of them for breach thereof, is the act both of himselfe, and of all the rest, because done in the Person, and by the Right of every one of them in particular. Besides, if any one, or more of them, pretend a breach of the Covenant made by the Sovereigne at his Institution; and others, or one other of his Subjects, or himselfe alone, pretend there was no such breach, there is in this case, no Judge to decide the controversie: it returns therefore to the Sword again: and

every man recovereth the right of Protecting himselfe by his own strength, contrary to the designe they had in the Institution. It is therefore in vain to grant Sovereignty by way of precedent Covenant. The opinion that any Monarch receiveth his Power by Covenant, that is to say on Condition, proceedeth from want of understanding this easie truth, that Covenants being but words, and breath, have no force to oblige, contain, constrain, or protect any man, but what it has from the publique Sword; that is, from the untied hands of that Man, or Assembly of men that hath the Sovereignty, and whose actions are avouched by them all, and performed by the strength of them all, in him united. But when an Assembly of men is made Sovereigne; then no man imagineth any such Covenant to have past in the Institution; for no man is so dull as to say, for example, the People of *Rome*, made a Covenant with the Romans, to hold the Sovereignty on such or such conditions; which not performed, the Romans might lawfully depose the Roman people. That men see not the reason to be alike in a Monarchy, and in a Popular Government, proceedeth from the ambition of some, that are kinder to the government of an Assembly, whereof they may hope to participate, than of Monarchy, which they despair to enjoy.

Thirdly, because the major part hath by consenting voices declared a Sovereigne; he that dissented must now consent with the rest; that is, be contented to avow all the actions he shall do, or else justly be destroyed by the rest. For if he voluntarily entered into the Congregation of them that were assembled, he sufficiently declared thereby his will (and therefore tacitely covenanted) to stand to what the major part should ordayne: and therefore if he refuse to stand thereto, or make Protestation against any of their Decrees, he does contrary to his Covenant, and therefore unjustly. And whether he be of the Congregation, or not;

and whether his consent be asked, or not, he must either submit to their decrees, or be left in the condition of warre he was in before; wherein he might without injustice be destroyed by any man whatsoever.

## CHAPTER X

### JOSEPH BUTLER AND HIS CENTURY

PARTLY because of certain disagreeable personal traits of Hobbes, but largely because of the uncompromising boldness with which he baldly announced the selfishness of man, his countrymen, through the next hundred years, set to work to construct more pleasing systems of ethics. Some considered true morality a more fundamental matter than the arbitrary decrees of an emperor. But in thus criticizing Hobbes, they misjudged him. For him, too, true morality, the seeking of pleasure, was more fundamental; absolutism was but its indispensable means. Others insisted that man was not the selfish brute that Hobbes depicted, that he had genuine altruistic tendencies. And some regarded Hobbes as merely one-sided, seeing that altruism and selfishness might be finally reconciled.

Contemporaneous with Hobbes were the Cambridge Platonists. Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), the most influential member of this group, wrote *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, a book which was published in 1731, forty-three years after his death. Hobbes had made all knowledge motions of the brain stimulated by contract through sensation. He had further made the good in life depend upon desire or volition. To both these positions Cudworth opposed the philosophy of Plato and the Neo-Platonists. The world of sense, since it is but the image of reality, is not the object of knowledge. Knowledge requires a World of Ideas, which, as the Neo-Platonists from Plotinus to Proclus maintained, can, on account of its ideal character, exist

only in a mind, and the divine mind is the only mind which can contain the world. These ideas, including the Idea of Good from which all moral distinctions are derived, are independent of mere volition either human or divine. Hobbes had made good depend on man's will to pleasure; Duns Scotus and William of Occam, in the later Middle Ages, referred morality to God's will. They argued that if God is subject to a principle of good which he did not establish by divine decree, he is limited and therefore not an omnipotent God. Good can only exist as God has willed. Neither Plato nor Cudworth appreciated this reasoning and consequently Cudworth holds that it is not because God forbids certain acts that they are wrong, but that because they are wrong, God forbids them.

Similarly against Hobbes he argues that laws do not make right and wrong but are rather the approximate expression of what has always been such. And, as previously implied, the knowledge of right and wrong is not gained through empirical investigation, but is in some sense innate. For this reason one may label Cudworth a rational intuitionist; rational because intellect rather than volition or emotion determines morality, and intuitionist because the knowledge of the intellect does not have its origin in previous sense experience.

Henry More (1614-1687), attempted to make explicit the fundamental principles of morality which Cudworth called intuitive. In so doing More revealed one of the difficulties which besets every intuitionist theory. A reasonable man will allow one or two unproven assumptions if the theory deduced is consistent and satisfactory. But More lists some two dozen ultimate moral principles. This, if anything, runs counter to the primary necessity of theoretic unity. The intuitionists from More's time on have been consistently guilty of too great a liberality in ultimate principles and no one is surprised to learn of another school

arising to supplant intuitionism. It will be the utilitarianism of the next chapter.

In the meantime there were others who opposed Hobbes. Shaftesbury (1671-1713), and Hutcheson (1694-1747), though intuitionists, were unable to agree to the rationalism of Cudworth. Particularly directed against egoism is their stress on the altruistic aspects of man's nature.<sup>1</sup>

"That the perceptions of moral good and evil, are perfectly different from those of natural good, or advantage," says Hutcheson, "every one must convince himself by reflecting upon the different manner in which he finds himself affected when these objects occur to him. Had we no sense of good distinct from the advantage or interest arising from the external senses, and the perceptions of beauty and harmony; our admiration and love toward a fruitful field or commodious habitation, would be much the same with what we have toward a generous friend or any noble character; for both are or may be advantageous to us; and we should no more admire any action, or love any person in a distant country or age, whose influence could not extend to us, than we love the mountains of Peru, while we are unconcerned in the Spanish trade. We should have the same sentiments and affections toward inanimate beings, which we have toward rational agents; which yet every one knows to be false. Upon comparison we say, 'Why should we admire or love with esteem inanimate beings? They have no intention of good to us; their nature makes them fit for our uses, which they neither know nor study to serve. But it is not so with rational agents: they study our interest, and delight in our happiness, and are benevolent toward us.'

"Suppose we reap the same advantage from two men, one of whom serves us from delight in our happiness, and

<sup>1</sup> The following illustrative material is taken at random from *Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil*, by Francis Hutcheson.

love toward us; the other from views of self-interest, or by constraint: both are in this case equally beneficial, or advantageous to us, and yet we shall have quite different sentiments of them. We must then certainly have other perceptions of moral actions than those of advantage; and that power of receiving these perceptions may be called a moral sense, since the definition agrees to it, viz.: a determination of the mind to receive any idea from the presence of an object which occurs to us, independent on our will.

“This perhaps will be equally evident from our ideas of evil done to us designedly by a rational agent. Our senses of natural good and evil would make us receive with equal serenity and composure, an assault, a buffet, an affront from a neighbour, a cheat from a partner, or trustee, as we would an equal damage from the fall of a beam, a tile or a tempest; and we should have the same affections and sentiments of both. Villainy, treachery, cruelty, would be as meekly resented as a blast, or mildew, or an overflowing stream. But I fancy every one is very differently affected on these occasions, though there may be equal natural evil in both. Nay, actions no way detrimental may occasion the strongest anger and indignation, if they evidence only impotent hatred or contempt. And on the other hand, the intervention of moral ideas may prevent our hatred of the agent, or bad moral apprehension of that action, which causes to us the greatest natural evil. Thus the opinion of justice in any sentence, will prevent all ideas of moral evil in the execution or hatred toward the magistrate, who is the immediate cause of our greatest sufferings.

“This is the second thing to be considered, ‘Whether our sense of the moral good or evil in the actions of others can be overbalanced or bribed by views of interest.’ Now I may indeed easily be capable of wishing that another would do an action I abhor as morally evil, if it were very advantageous to me: interest in that case may overbalance my de-

sire of virtue in another. But no interest to myself will make me approve an action as morally good, which, without that interest to myself, would have appeared morally evil, if, upon computing its whole effects, it appears to produce as great a moment of good in the whole, when it is not beneficial to me, as it did before when it was. In our sense of moral good or evil, our own private advantage or loss is of no more moment, than the advantage or loss of a third person, to make an action appear good or evil. This sense therefore cannot be over-balanced by interest. How ridiculous an attempt would it be to engage a man by rewards, or to threaten him into a good opinion of an action which was contrary to his moral notions? We may procure dissimulation by such means, and that is all.

"We are not to imagine that this moral sense, more than the other senses, supposes any innate ideas, knowledge, or practical proposition. We mean by it only a determination of our minds to receive amiable or disagreeable ideas of actions when they occur to our observation, antecedent to any opinions of advantage or loss to redound to ourselves from them; even as we are pleased with a regular form, or an harmonious composition, without having any knowledge of mathematics, or seeing any advantage in that form, or composition, different from the immediate pleasure."

But more important than the insistence on altruism is their positing a special moral faculty, not the reason or intellect, not volition, but the moral sense, by which man becomes aware of right and wrong. The guidance furnished by the moral sense, which we may name conscience,<sup>2</sup> is not necessarily inconsistent with what reason would determine to be best, but, though it may be corrupted, it is less likely to lead

<sup>2</sup> The word *conscience* changes its meaning from author to author. In Cudworth it would be a synonym for practical reason; note its use in Butler; for a special discussion, study *Is Conscience an Emotion*, a contemporary investigation including anthropological material, by Hastings Rashdall.



us astray than reason is to be mistaken. Thus for the ordinary man conscience is the safest guide. The emotional or aesthetic intuitionism of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, with other factors, led English thought from the consideration of rational principles to a greater degree of introspection and heavier emphasis on empirical psychology.

The vagueness of the phrase, moral sense, and the lack of penetration, for the men between Hobbes and Butler were not the greatest of the world's thinkers, greatly diminish the value of their systems. But on their pages are found original suggestions which greater minds have profitably utilized.

David Hume and Adam Smith, who in different ways made sympathy the highest motive to moral action, though belonging to this period, we must pass by to come to the most important ethical writer of the century, Joseph Butler (1692-1752).

The life of Joseph Butler was as free from startling events as was Hobbes' beset by them. Not even marriage disturbed his private tranquillity. After preparing for the ministry he took orders, obtained advancement in due season, was later consecrated bishop, attained a fame which has since steadily increased, and finally took quiet leave of this world's activities. He left behind him a most closely reasoned defense of Christianity, *The Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, on which his fame chiefly rests, and, omitting a few minor matters, *Fifteen Sermons* explaining his system of ethics. While their study begets the pious hope that his non-philosophical parishioners slumbered peacefully, it is difficult to overestimate their importance for subsequent ethical speculation. The intellectual autobiography of Henry Sidgwick, included in the Preface to the sixth edition of *The Methods of Ethics*, is a typical example of such an influence. Butler is, of course, not an exclusive but an indispensable factor in the formu-

lation of both yesterday's and to-day's ethics in England. Two of his sermons are here reproduced.<sup>3</sup>

### SERMONS <sup>4</sup>

*For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.*—ROMANS II. 14.

1. As speculative truth admits of different kinds of proof, so likewise moral obligations may be shown by different methods. If the real nature of any creature leads him and is

<sup>3</sup> As was the case with Plato, here also an outline of the selection is given.

I. Man's Nature is revealed in its purpose.

1. Two cautions.

2. Its difficulty does not make the task impossible.

II. An appeal to Nature is an appeal to Conscience.

1. Statement: illustrative parallel between optics and ethics.

Man has altruistic propensions approved by conscience.

2. Objection: when passion arises we approve of cruelty and selfishness, yet passion is natural.

Each man must follow his individual nature without blaming another.

3. Reply. Nature has several meanings. The meaning above makes it impossible to act contrary to nature and hence empties obligation of all significance.

a) Two meanings of nature excluded.

b) Nature means conscience, a superior principle of reflection which judges other internal principles as well as actions, thus making man a moral agent. It is supreme.

c) Argument clarified by the contrast of disproportion.

III. Superior principles should govern by virtue of their nature.

1. Self-love an illustration.

a) Acting contrary even to the strongest part of one's nature does not cause disproportion.

b) But disproportion is caused by acting contrary to a higher principle.

2. Conscience also superior.

a) Strength is an irrelevant consideration; if passion rules, it is usurpation.

b) Conscience has authority; since its purpose is to govern, it was put in us for the purpose of governing.

3. Consequences of denial. We would ruin ourselves, harm others and blaspheme God.

Therefore, we cannot deny the authority of conscience.

<sup>4</sup> Sermons I, II, III are entitled *Upon Human Nature*. The latter two are reproduced here with Sermon III beginning at paragraph 19.

adapted to such and such purposes only, or more than to any other; this is a reason to believe the author of that nature intended it for those purposes. Thus there is no doubt the eye was intended for us to see with. And the more complex any constitution is, and the greater variety of parts there are which thus tend to some one end, the stronger is the proof that such end was designed.

2. However, when the inward frame of man is considered as any guide in morals, the utmost caution must be used that none make peculiarities in their own temper, or anything which is the effect of particular customs, though observable in several, the standard of what is common to the species; and above all, that the highest principle be not forgot or excluded, that to which belongs the adjustment and correction of all other inward movements and affections; which principle will of course have some influence, but which being in nature supreme, as shall now be shown, ought to preside over and govern all the rest. The difficulty of rightly observing the two former cautions; the appearance there is of some small diversity amongst mankind with respect to this faculty, with respect to their natural sense of moral good and evil; and the attention necessary to survey with any exactness what passes within, have occasioned that it is not so much agreed what is the standard of the internal nature of man, as of his external form. Neither is this last exactly settled. Yet we understand one another when we speak of the shape of a human body: so likewise we do when we speak of the heart and inward principles, how far soever the standard is from being exact or precisely fixed. There is therefore ground for an attempt of showing men to themselves, of showing them what course of life and behaviour their real nature points out and would lead them to.

3. Now obligations of virtue shown, and motives to the practice of it enforced, from a review of the nature of man,

are to be considered as an appeal to each particular person's heart and natural conscience: as the external senses are appealed to for the proof of things cognisable by them. Since then our inward feelings, and the perceptions we receive from our external senses, are equally real; to argue from the former to life and conduct is as little liable to exception, as to argue from the latter to absolute speculative truth. A man can as little doubt whether his eyes were given him to see with, as he can doubt of the truth of the science of *optics*, deduced from ocular experiments. And allowing the inward feeling, shame; a man can as little doubt whether it was given him to prevent his doing shameful actions, as he can doubt whether his eyes were given him to guide his steps. And as to these inward feelings themselves; that they are real, that man has in his nature passions and affections, can no more be questioned, than that he has external senses. Neither can the former be wholly mistaken; though to a certain degree liable to greater mistakes than the latter.

4. There can be no doubt but that several propensions or instincts, several principles in the heart of man, carry him to society, and to contribute to the happiness of it, in a sense and a manner in which no inward principle leads him to evil. These principles, propensions, or instincts which lead him to do good, are approved of by a certain faculty within, quite distinct from these propensions themselves. All this hath been fully made out in the foregoing discourse.

5. But it may be said, "What is all this, though true, to the purpose of virtue and religion? these require, not only that we do good to others, when we are led this way, by benevolence or reflection, happening to be stronger than other principles, passions, or appetites; but likewise that the *whole* character be formed upon thought and reflection; that *every* action be directed by some determinate rule, some other rule than the strength and prevalency of any principle or passion. What sign is there in our nature (for

the inquiry is only about what is to be collected from thence) that this was intended by its Author? Or how does so various and fickle a temper as that of man appear adapted thereto? It may indeed be absurd and unnatural for men to act without any reflection; nay, without regard to that particular kind of reflection which you call conscience; because this does belong to our nature. For as there never was a man but who approved one place, prospect, building, before another: so it does not appear that there ever was a man who would not have approved an action of humanity rather than of cruelty; interest and passion being quite out of the case. But interest and passion do come in, and are often too strong for and prevail over reflection and conscience. Now as brutes have various instincts, by which they are carried on to the end the Author of their nature intended them for: is not man in the same condition; with this difference only, that to his instincts (i. e. appetites and passions) is added the principle of reflection or conscience? And as brutes act agreeably to their nature, in following that principle or particular instinct which for the present is strongest in them: does not man likewise act agreeably to his nature, or obey the law of his creation by following that principle, be it passion or conscience, which for the present happens to be strongest in him? Thus different men are by their particular nature hurried on to pursue honour, or riches, or pleasure: there are also persons whose temper leads them in an uncommon degree to kindness, compassion, doing good to their fellow-creatures: as there are others who are given to suspend their judgment, to weigh and consider things, and to act upon thought and reflection. Let every one then quietly follow his nature; as passion, reflection, appetite, the several parts of it, happen to be strongest: but let not the man of virtue take upon him to blame the ambitious, the covetous, the dissolute; since these equally with him obey and follow their nature. Thus, as in some cases we fol-

low our nature in doing the works *contained in the law*, so in other cases we follow nature in doing contrary."

6. Now all this licentious talk entirely goes upon a supposition, that men follow their nature in the same sense, in violating the known rules of justice and honesty for the sake of a present gratification, as they do in following those rules when they have no temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be so which St. Paul asserts, that men are *by nature a law to themselves*. If by following nature were meant only acting as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of nature as any guide in morals: nay the very mention of deviating from nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of distinction, would absolutely have no meaning. For did ever any one act otherwise than as he pleased? And yet the ancients speak of deviating from nature as vice; and of following nature so much as a distinction, that according to them the perfection of virtue consists therein. So that language itself should teach people another sense to the words *following nature*, than barely acting as we please.

7. Let it, however, be observed, that though the words *human nature* are to be explained, yet the real question of this discourse is not concerning the meaning of words, any other than as the explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the assertion, that *every man is naturally a law to himself*, that *every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it*. This St. Paul affirms in the words of the text, and this the foregoing objection really denies by seeming to allow it. And the objection will be fully answered, and the text before us explained, by observing that *nature* is considered in different views, and the words used in different senses; and by showing in what view it is considered, and in what sense the word is used, when intended to express and signify that which is the guide of life, that by which men are a law to them-

selves. I say, the explanation of the term will be sufficient, because from thence it will appear, that in some senses of the word *nature* cannot be, but that in another sense it manifestly is, a law to us.

8.—I. By nature is often meant no more than some principle in man, without regard either to the kind or degree of it. Thus the passion of anger, and the affection of parents to their children, would be called equally *natural*. And as the same person hath often contrary principles, which at the same time draw contrary ways, he may by the same action both follow and contradict his nature in this sense of the word; he may follow one passion and contradict another.

II. *Nature* is frequently spoken of as consisting in those passions which are strongest, and most influence the actions; which being vicious ones, mankind is in this sense naturally vicious, or vicious by nature. Thus St. Paul says of the Gentiles, *who were dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the spirit of disobedience, that they were by nature the children of wrath*. They could be no otherwise children of wrath by nature, than they were vicious by nature.

Here then are two different senses of the word *nature*, in neither of which men can at all be said to be a law to themselves. They are mentioned only to be excluded; to prevent their being confounded, as the latter is in the objection, with another sense of it, which is now to be inquired after and explained.

9.—III. The apostle asserts, that the Gentiles *do by NATURE the things contained in the law*. Nature is indeed here put by way of distinction from revelation, but yet it is not a mere negative. He intends to express more than that by which they *did not*, that by which they *did* the works of the law; namely, by *nature*. It is plain the meaning of the word is not the same in this passage as in the former, where it is spoken of as evil; for in this latter it is spoken of as

good; as that by which they acted, or might have acted virtuously. What that is in man by which he is *naturally a law to himself*, is explained in the following words: *which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.*

10. If there be a distinction to be made between the *works written in their hearts*, and the *witness of conscience*; by the former must be meant the natural disposition to kindness and compassion, to do what is of good report, to which this apostle often refers; that part of the nature of man, treated of in the foregoing discourse, which with very little reflection and of course leads him to society, and by means of which he naturally acts a just and good part in it, unless other passions or interests lead him astray. Yet since other passions, and regards to private interest, which lead us (though indirectly, yet they lead us) astray, are themselves in a degree equally natural, and often most prevalent; and since we have no method of seeing the particular degrees in which one or the other is placed in us by nature; it is plain the former, considered merely as natural, good and right as they are, can no more be a law to us than the latter.

11. But there is a superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions: which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust: which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly; and which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own. But this part of the office of conscience is beyond my present design explicitly to con-



sider. It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that is a law to himself: by this faculty, I say, not to be considered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others; but considered as a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so.

12. This *prerogative*, this *natural supremacy*, of the faculty which surveys, approves or disapproves the several affections of our mind and actions of our lives, being that by which men *are a law to themselves*, their conformity or disobedience to which law of our nature renders their actions, in the highest and most proper sense, natural or unnatural; it is fit it be further explained to you: and I hope it will be so, if you will attend to the following reflections.

13. Man may act according to that principle or inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a way disproportionate to, and violate his real proper nature. Suppose a brute creature by any bait to be allured into a snare, by which he is destroyed. He plainly followed the bend of his nature, leading him to gratify his appetite: there is an entire correspondence between his whole nature and such an action: such action therefore is natural. But suppose a man, foreseeing the same danger of certain ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present gratification; he in this instance would follow his strongest desire, as did the brute creature: but there would be as manifest a disproportion, between the nature of a man and such an action, as between the meanest work of art and the skill of the greatest master in that art: which disproportion arises not from considering the action singly in *itself*, or in its *consequences*; but from *comparison* of it with the nature of the agent. And since such an action is utterly disproportionate to the nature of man, it is in the strictest and most proper sense unnatural; this word expressing that disproportion. Therefore instead of the words *disproportionate to his na-*

ture, the word *unnatural* may now be put; this being more familiar to us: but let it be observed, that it stands for the same thing precisely.

14. Now what is it which renders such a rash action unnatural? Is it that he went against the principle of reasonable and cool self-love, considered *merely* as a part of his nature? No: for if he had acted the contrary way, he would equally have gone against a principle, or part of his nature, namely, passion or appetite. But to deny a present appetite, from foresight that the gratification of it would end in immediate ruin or extreme misery, is by no means an unnatural action: whereas to contradict or go against cool self-love for the sake of such gratification, is so in the instance before us. Such an action then being unnatural; and its being so not arising from a man's going against a principle or desire barely, nor in going against that principle or desire which happens for the present to be strongest; it necessarily follows, that there must be some other difference or distinction to be made between these two principles, passion and cool self-love, than what I have yet taken notice of. And this difference, not being a difference in strength or degree, I call a difference in *nature* and in *kind*. And since, in the instance still before us, if passion prevails over self-love, the consequent action is unnatural; but if self-love prevails over passion, the action is natural: it is manifest that self-love is in human nature a superior principle to passion. This may be contradicted without violating that nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the economy of man's nature, reasonable self-love must govern. Thus, without particular consideration of conscience, we may have a clear conception of the *superior nature* of one inward principle to another; and see that there really is this natural superiority, quite distinct from degrees of strength and prevalence.

15. Let us now take a view of the nature of man, as con-

sisting partly of various appetites, passions, affections, and partly of the principle of reflection or conscience; leaving quite out all consideration of the different degrees of strength, in which either of them prevail, and it will further appear that there is this natural superiority of one inward principle to another, and that it is even part of the idea of reflection or conscience.

Passion or appetite implies a direct simple tendency towards such and such objects, without distinction of the means by which they are to be obtained. Consequently it will often happen there will be a desire of particular objects, in cases where they cannot be obtained without manifest injury to others. Reflection or conscience comes in, and disapproves the pursuit of them in these circumstances; but the desire remains. Which is to be obeyed, appetite or reflection? Cannot this question be answered, from the economy and constitution of human nature merely, without saying which is strongest? Or need this at all come into consideration? Would not the question be *intelligibly* and fully answered by saying, that the principle of reflection or conscience being compared with the various appetites, passions, and affections in men, the former is manifestly superior and chief, without regard to strength? And how often soever the latter happens to prevail, it is mere *usurpation*: the former remains in nature and in kind its superior; and every instance of such prevalence of the latter is an instance of breaking in upon and violation of the constitution of man.

16. All this is no more than the distinction, which every body is acquainted with, between *mere power* and *authority*: only instead of being intended to express the difference between what is possible, and what is lawful in civil government; here it has been shown applicable to the several principles in the mind of man. Thus that principle, by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own heart,

temper, and actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some influence; which may be said of every passion, of the lowest appetites: but likewise as being superior; as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others: insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itself: and, to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world.

17. This gives us a further view of the nature of man; shows us what course of life we were made for: not only that our real nature leads us to be influenced in some degree by reflection and conscience; but likewise in what degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeably to the constitution of our nature: that this faculty was placed within to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of action. This is its right and office: thus sacred is its authority. And how often soever men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of passion which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no alteration as to the *natural right* and *office* of conscience.

18. Let us now turn this whole matter another way, and suppose there was no such thing at all as this natural supremacy of conscience; that there was no distinction to be made between one inward principle and another, but only that of strength; and see what would be the consequence.

Consider then what is the latitude and compass of the actions of man with regard to himself, his fellow-creatures, and the Supreme Being? What are their bounds, besides that of our natural power? With respect to the two first,

they are plainly no other than these: no man seeks misery as such for himself; and no one unprovoked does mischief to another for its own sake. For in every degree within these grounds, mankind knowingly from passion or wantonness bring ruin and misery upon themselves and others. And impiety and profaneness, I mean, what every one would call so who believes the being of God, have absolutely no bounds at all. Men blaspheme the Author of nature, formally and in words renounce their allegiance to their Creator. Put an instance then with respect to any one of these three. Though we should suppose profane swearing, and in general that kind of impiety now mentioned, to mean nothing, yet it implies wanton disregard and irreverence towards an infinite Being, our Creator; and is this as suitable to the nature of man, as reverence and dutiful submission of heart towards that Almighty Being? Or suppose a man guilty of parricide, with all the circumstances of cruelty which such an action can admit of. This action is done in consequence of its principle being for the present strongest: and if there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of strength; the strength being given, you have the whole nature of the man given, so far as it relates to this matter. The action plainly corresponds to the principle, the principle being in that degree of strength it was: it therefore corresponds to the whole nature of the man. Upon comparing the action and the whole nature, there arises no disproportion, there appears no unsuitableness between them. Thus the *murder of a father* and the *nature of man* correspond to each other, as the same nature and an act of filial duty. If there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of strength; we can make no distinction between these two actions, considered as the actions of such a creature; but in our coolest hours must approve or disapprove them equally: than which nothing can be reduced to a greater absurdity.

19. The natural supremacy of reflection or conscience being thus established; we may from it form a distinct notion of what is meant by *human nature*, when virtue is said to consist in following it, and vice in deviating from it.

As the idea of a civil constitution implies in it united strength, various subordinations, under one direction, that of the supreme authority; the different strength of each particular member of the society not coming into the idea; whereas, if you leave out the subordination, the union, and the one direction, you destroy and lose it: so reason, several appetites, passions, and affections, prevailing in different degrees of strength, is not *that* idea or notion of *human nature*; but *that nature* consists in these several principles considered as having a natural respect to each other, in the several passions being naturally subordinate to the one superior principle of reflection or conscience. Every bias, instinct, propension within, is a real part of our nature, but not the whole: add to these the superior faculty, whose office it is to adjust, manage, and preside over them, and take in this its natural superiority, and you complete the idea of human nature. And as in civil government the constitution is broken in upon, and violated by power and strength prevailing over authority; so the constitution of man is broken in upon and violated by the lower faculties or principles within prevailing over that which is in its nature supreme over them all. Thus, when it is said by ancient writers, that tortures and death are not so contrary to human nature as injustice; by this to be sure is not meant, that the aversion to the former in mankind is less strong and prevalent than their aversion to the latter: but that the former is only contrary to our nature considered in a partial view, and which takes in only the lowest part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our nature, considered in a higher sense, as a system and constitution, contrary to the whole economy of man.

20. And from all these things put together, nothing can be more evident, than that, exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in: but that *from his make, constitution, or nature, he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself*. He hath the rule of right within: what is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it.

21. The inquiries which have been made by men of leisure, after some general rule, the conformity to, or disagreement from which, should denominate our actions good or evil, are in many respects of great service. Yet let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt, but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstance. Neither do there appear any cases which look like exceptions to this: but those of superstition, and of partiality to ourselves. Superstition may perhaps be somewhat of an exception: but partiality to ourselves is not; this being itself dishonesty. For a man to judge that to be the equitable, the moderate, the right part for him to act, which he would see to be hard, unjust, oppressive in another; this is plain vice, and can proceed only from great unfairness of mind.

22. But allowing that mankind hath the rule of right within himself, yet it may be asked, "What obligations are we under to attend to and follow it?" I answer: it has been proved that man by his nature is a law to himself, without the particular distinct consideration of the positive sanctions of that law; the rewards and punishments which we feel, and those which from the light of reason we have ground to believe are annexed to it. The question then car-

ries its own answer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law, is its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action, is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature: it therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path, and follow this guide, without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity.

23. However, let us hear what is to be said against obeying this law of our nature. And the sum is no more than this: "Why should we be concerned about anything out of and beyond ourselves? If we do find within ourselves regards to others, and restraints of we know not how many different kinds; yet these being embarrassments, and hindering us from going the nearest way to our own good, why should we not endeavour to suppress and get over them?"

24. Thus people go on with words which, when applied to human nature, and the condition in which it is placed in this world, have really no meaning. For does not all this kind of talk go upon supposition, that our happiness in this world consists in somewhat quite distinct from regard to others; and that it is the privilege of vice to be without restraint or confinement? Whereas, on the contrary, the enjoyments, in a manner all the common enjoyments of life, even the pleasures of vice, depend upon these regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures. Throw off all regards to others, and we should be quite indifferent to infamy and to honour; there could be no such thing at all as ambition; and scarce any such thing as covetousness; for we should likewise be equally indifferent to the disgrace of poverty, the several neglects and kinds of contempt which accompany this state; and to the reputation of riches, the



regard and respect they usually procure. Neither is restraint by any means peculiar to one course of life: but our very nature, exclusive of conscience and our condition, lays us under an absolute necessity of it. We cannot gain any end whatever without being confined to the proper means, which is often the most painful and uneasy confinement. And in numberless instances a present appetite cannot be gratified without such apparent and immediate ruin and misery, that the most dissolute man in the world chooses to forego the pleasure, rather than endure the pain.

25. Is the meaning then, to indulge those regards to our fellow-creatures, and submit to those restraints, which upon the whole are attended with more satisfaction than uneasiness, and get over only those which bring more uneasiness and inconvenience than satisfaction? "Doubtless this was our meaning." You have changed sides then. Keep to this; be consistent with yourselves; and you and the men of virtue are *in general* perfectly agreed. But let us take care and avoid mistakes. Let it not be taken for granted that the temper of envy, rage, resentment, yields greater delight than meekness, forgiveness, compassion, and good-will: especially when it is acknowledged that rage, envy, resentment, are in themselves mere misery; and the satisfaction arising from the indulgence of them is little more than relief from that misery; whereas the temper of compassion and benevolence is itself delightful; and the indulgence of it, by doing good, affords new positive delight and enjoyment. Let it not be taken for granted, that the satisfaction arising from the reputation of riches and power, however obtained, and from the respect paid to them, is greater than the satisfaction arising from the reputation of justice, honesty, charity, and the esteem which is universally acknowledged to be their due. And if it be doubtful which of these satisfactions is the greatest, as there are persons who think neither of them very considerable, yet there can be no doubt

concerning ambition and covetousness, virtue and a good mind, considered in themselves, and as leading to different courses of life; there can, I say, be no doubt which temper and which course is attended with most peace and tranquillity of mind, which with most perplexity, vexation, and inconvenience. And both the virtues and vices which have been now mentioned, do in a manner equally imply in them regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures.

26. And with respect to restraint and confinement: whoever will consider the restraints from fear and shame, the dissimulation, mean arts of concealment, servile compliances, one or other of which belong to almost every course of vice, will soon be convinced that the man of virtue is by no means upon a disadvantage in this respect. How many instances are there in which men feel and own and cry aloud under the chains of vice with which they are enthralled, and which yet they will not shake off! How many instances, in which persons manifestly go through more pains and self-denial to gratify a vicious passion, than would have been necessary to the conquest of it!

27. To this is to be added, that when virtue has become habitual, when the temper of it is acquired, what was before confinement ceases to be so, by becoming choice and delight. Whatever restraint and guard upon ourselves may be needful to unlearn any unnatural distortion or odd gesture; yet, in all propriety of speech, natural behaviour must be the most easy and unrestrained.

28. It is manifest that, in the common course of life, there is seldom any inconsistency between our duty and what is *called* interest: it is much seldomer that there is an inconsistency between duty and what is really our present interest; meaning by interest, happiness and satisfaction. Self-love then, though confined to the interest of the present world, does in general perfectly coincide with virtue; and leads us to one and the same course of life. But, whatever

exceptions there are to this, which are much fewer than they are commonly thought, all shall be set right at the final distribution of things. It is a manifest absurdity to suppose evil prevailing finally over good, under the conduct and administration of a perfect Mind.

29. The whole argument, which I have been now insisting upon, may be thus summed up, and given you in one view. The nature of man is adapted to some course of action or other. Upon comparing some actions with this nature, they appear suitable and correspondent to it: from comparison of other actions with the same nature, there arises to our view some unsuitableness or disproportion. The correspondence of actions to the nature of the agent renders them natural: their disproportion to it, unnatural. That an action is correspondent to the nature of the agent, does not arise from its being agreeable to the principle which happens to be the strongest: for it may be so, and yet be quite disproportionate to the nature of the agent. The correspondence therefore, or disproportion, arises from somewhat else. This can be nothing but a difference in nature and kind, altogether distinct from strength, between the inward principles. Some then are in nature and kind superior to others. And the correspondence arises from the action being conformable to the higher principle; and the unsuitableness from its being contrary to it. Reasonable self-love and conscience are the chief or superior principles in the nature of man: because an action may be suitable to this nature, though all other principles be violated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of those are. Conscience and self-love, if we understand our true happiness, always lead us the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things. Thus they who have been so wise in their generation

as to regard only their own supposed interest, at the expense and to the injury of others, shall at last find, that he who has given up all the advantages of the present world, rather than violate his conscience and the relations of life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own interest and happiness.

## CHAPTER XI

### IMMANUEL KANT

(1724-1804)

KANT is both a very perplexing and a very simple moral philosopher: perplexing because he conceives the essence of morality in the most general way possible, and consequently what he has to say about this human subject seems to have all the juices of life squeezed out; simple because he reduces morality to a single attitude, which he lays deep in the rational equipment of each of us and which he holds to be central to our whole self-direction. Though Kant built consciously upon an analysis of preceding and contemporary philosophers—notably upon Wolff and Hume—he built also upon the religious spirit as laid deeply in his muscles by early pietistic training. Perhaps the best way to introduce Kant is to conceive him as the last and most logical of the long line of Hebrew prophets and Christian Apostles.

In such a perspective human life wears a double aspect—on one side it is natural and evil, on the other divine and good. There is no bridge between the two save as a bridge is constructed by grace. Kant conceived man on his natural side to be wholly a creature of impulse with no moral potency whatever. But all men have, without divine mediation, a source of morality laid deeply in their souls. The proof of this is the feeling of duty. In simple men this becomes the voice of conscience speaking the will of God; in more sophisticated men the demand of reason voicing universal law. But, whatever the form, duty is a command laid

upon mundane human nature from the citadel of the human soul towering beyond space and time.

The emphatic nature of this command shows that it represents no mere want or interest. It commands no specific thing, but an orientation of life with reference to law rather than to pleasure. Duty is a categorical imperative, claiming obedience for its own sake with no "ifs" and "ands" attached. Do your duty because it is your duty—thus the "stern daughter of the voice of God" to all the children of men.

The very fact that we find in ourselves this experience of necessary obligation to principle shows that we are more than earthly. Kant does not argue for freedom in the usual way. He was too much of a scientist not to see that the cause-effect relation holds throughout the natural order. But in the heat of natural living man is arrested by this compelling voice of duty: "You must." If we *must*, of course we *can*; and, lo, man is free. In the familiar words of Emerson,

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
So near is God to man,  
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,  
The youth replies, I *can*.

With enormous patience Kant tracks this sense of duty from common experience to metaphysical heights, and back again to the humblest human scene. Not its efficacy, however, for action, but its saving presence in consciousness is his theme. No bribes are held out by conscience to get its imperative obeyed. Indeed, if any man do his duty for advantage, he does not do his duty at all. Duty must be done for its own sake—out of pure reverence for law as such. The categorical imperative does indeed set a test for rationality—utter impartiality, complete universalization. But it does not enforce the test. Indeed, human nature be-

ing what it is, man seldom, if ever, does his duty wholly for its own sake: but this is an entirely irrelevant fact. Duty remains duty always. To have a transparent good will, is the only good; to do duty dutifully is man's supreme good.

But what of happiness? Ah, that added to duty would be the *complete* good. Though happiness be excluded as a moral aim, it would be a better world in which happiness followed duty as a dependable by-product. The completely rational man will aim only at duty; but a completely rational universe would reward him with happiness. Is this a rational world? It *must* be. On what compulsion? On the compulsion of seeing human hope otherwise frustrated.

If this seems to the student too high-handed a manner of dealing with the universe, it must be said in complete fairness to Kant that he came to the reassuring conclusion after having paid the price of deep reflection and sustained analysis. He had early faced and solved for himself the question raised by David Hume—whether pure human reason is capable of arriving at ultimate truth. Hume had concluded that it is not—that, indeed, “Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.” Kant's own conclusion is not as completely opposed to Hume's as might at first be supposed, though he comes to it by another route. Kant proved to his own satisfaction, and his ethical writings assume this as foundation, that reason is supreme in the field of science. It not only arranges and orders the materials presented to it, but it pre-determines the form in which they shall be presented, by prescribing space, time, causality, and such like as the costumes its guests must wear. It is master of its own house, for in one very substantial sense of the term it has constituted the material with which it deals. Pure reason plays thus a creative rôle inside its natural limits. But the supremely important questions for human life lie outside those limits; and this is proved by the

discovery that when reason attempts to deal with these questions in what we would call the scientific spirit, it falls into self-contradiction. Kant thinks to demonstrate, for example, that reason can equally well prove that a first cause both exists and does not exist, that man is both free and not free.

What, then, operates outside these limits as pure reason operates inside them? Kant calls the new agency practical reason. His own summary statement makes clear what function is here involved: "I have, therefore, found it necessary to deny knowledge . . . in order to find a place for faith." Practical reason indeed sponsors the demands made upon us by practice, by the living of life itself. We need assurance that goodness and power are somehow united; else the good man may not, after all, get the goods, and virtue may be surprised with unhappiness as its ironic guerdon. If speculative reason is creative within its limits, transforming its inheritance into an ordered world, why may not pure reason as practical be creative in the domain of practice, transforming our deepest yearning into substantial fruition? And so we create as postulates what we need as motivation and justification for our striving. How much does this differ from Hume, save in being more indirect and labored? If little, Hume is good company even for a Kant, though we have been forced to omit him from the immortals gathered together in this volume. And if under the Humean "passions" which reason serves can be gathered by Kant the greater immortals that religion has worshipped and historical ethics has respected, Hume is better company still.

Pure reason silenced both by Hume's analysis and by Kant's demonstration of its metaphysical incompetence, the rest follows for Kant as a matter of detail: God to guarantee the goods to the good, and immortality as the scene and condition of virtue's triumph. Dialectical rigour has been utilized to protect emotional demands from scientific



criticism: and morality through an alliance with theology emerges from Kant's great treatise clothed in new dignity and instinct with large promise for human hope.

The selections we here give look backward to his criticism of pure reason and forward to his final enthronement of faith as practical reason.

### FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE META-PHYSICS OF MORALITY<sup>1</sup>

#### SECTION I.—TRANSITION FROM ORDINARY MORAL CONCEPTIONS TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTION OF MORALITY

Nothing in the whole world, or even outside of the world, can possibly be regarded as good without limitation except a *good will*. No doubt it is a good and desirable thing to have intelligence, sagacity, judgment, and other intellectual gifts, by whatever name they may be called; it is also good and desirable in many respects to possess by nature such qualities as courage, resolution, and perseverance; but all these gifts of nature may be in the highest degree pernicious and hurtful, if the will which directs them, or what is called the *character*, is not itself good. The same thing applies to *gifts of fortune*. Power, wealth, honour, even good health, and that general well-being and contentment with one's lot which we call *happiness*, give rise to pride and not infrequently to insolence, if a man's will is not good; nor can a reflective and impartial spectator ever look with satisfaction upon the unbroken prosperity of a man who is destitute of the ornament of a pure and good will. A good will would therefore seem to be the indispensable condition without which no one is even worthy to be happy.

<sup>1</sup> Selections taken from *The Philosophy of Kant: As Contained in Extracts from his own Writings*. Selected and translated by John Watson. New Edition.

A man's will is good, not because the consequences which flow from it are good, nor because it is capable of attaining the end which it seeks, but it is good in itself, or because it wills the good. By a good will is not meant mere well-wishing; it consists in a resolute employment of all the means within one's reach, and its intrinsic value is in no way increased by success or lessened by failure.

This idea of the absolute value of mere will seems so extraordinary that, although it is endorsed even by the popular judgment, we must subject it to careful scrutiny.

If nature had meant to provide simply for the maintenance, the well-being, in a word the happiness, of beings which have reason and will, it must be confessed that, in making use of their reason, it has hit upon a very poor way of attaining its end. As a matter of fact the very worst way a man of refinement and culture can take to secure enjoyment and happiness is to make use of his reason for that purpose. Hence there is apt to arise in his mind a certain degree of *misology*, or hatred of reason. Finding that the arts which minister to luxury, and even the sciences, instead of bringing him happiness, only lay a heavier yoke on his neck, he at length comes to envy, rather than to despise, men of less refinement, who follow more closely the promptings of their natural impulses, and pay little heed to what reason tells them to do or to leave undone. It must at least be admitted, that one may deny reason to have much or indeed any value in the production of happiness and contentment, without taking a morose or ungrateful view of the goodness with which the world is governed. Such a judgment really means that life has another and a much nobler end than happiness, and that the true vocation of reason is to secure that end.

The true object of reason then, in so far as it is practical, or capable of influencing the will, must be to produce a

will which is *good in itself*, and not merely good *as a means* to something else. This will is not the only or the whole good, but it is the highest good, and the condition of all other good, even of the desire for happiness itself. It is therefore not inconsistent with the wisdom of nature that the cultivation of reason which is essential to the furtherance of its first and unconditioned object, the production of a good will, should, in this life at least, in many ways limit, or even make impossible, the attainment of happiness, which is its second and conditioned object.

To bring to clear consciousness the conception of a will which is good in itself, a conception already familiar to the popular mind, let us examine the conception of *duty*, which involves the idea of a good will as manifested under certain subjective limitations and hindrances.

I pass over actions which are admittedly violations of duty, for these, however useful they may be in the attainment of this or that end, manifestly do not proceed *from* duty. I set aside also those actions which are not actually inconsistent with duty, but which yet are done under the impulse of some natural inclination, although *not a direct inclination* to do these particular actions; for in these it is easy to determine whether the action that is consistent with duty, is done *from duty* or with some selfish object in view. It is more difficult to make a clear distinction of motives when there is a *direct* inclination to do a certain action, which is itself in conformity with duty. The preservation of one's own life, for instance, is a duty; but, as everyone has a natural inclination to preserve his life, the anxious care which most men usually devote to this object, has no intrinsic value, nor the maxim from which they act any moral import. They preserve their life *in accordance with* duty, but not *because of* duty. But, suppose adversity and hopeless sorrow to have taken away all desire for life; suppose that

the wretched man would welcome death as a release, and yet takes means to prolong his life simply from a sense of duty; then his maxim has a genuine moral import.

But, secondly, an action that is done from duty gets its moral value, *not from the object* which it is intended to secure, but from the maxim by which it is determined. Accordingly, the action has the same moral value whether the object is attained or not, if only the *principle* by which the will is determined to act is independent of every object of sensuous desire. What was said above makes it clear, that it is not the object aimed at, or, in other words, the consequences which flow from an action when these are made the end and motive of the will, that can give to the action an unconditioned and moral value. In what, then, can the moral value of an action consist, if it does not lie in the will itself, as directed to the attainment of a certain object? It can lie only in the principle of the will, no matter whether the object sought can be attained by the action or not. For the will stands as it were at the parting of the ways, between its *a priori* principle, which is formal, and its *a posteriori* material motive. As so standing it must be determined by something, and, as no action which is done from duty can be determined by a material principle, it can be determined only by the formal principle of all volition.

From the two propositions just set forth a third directly follows, which may be thus stated: *Duty is the obligation to act from reverence for law*. Now, I may have a natural *inclination* for the object that I expect to follow from my action, but I can never have *reverence* for that which is not a spontaneous activity of my will, but merely an effect of it; neither can I have reverence for any natural inclination, whether it is my own or another's. If it is my own, I can at most only approve of it; if it is manifested by another, I may regard it as conducive to my own interest, and hence

I may in certain cases even be said to have a love for it. But the only thing which I can reverence or which can lay me under an obligation to act, is the law which is connected with my will, not as a consequence, but as a principle; a principle which is not dependent upon natural inclination, but overmasters it, or at least allows it to have no influence whatever in determining my course of action. Now if an action which is done out of regard for duty sets entirely aside the influence of natural inclination and along with it every object of the will, nothing else is left by which the will can be determined but objectively the *law* itself, and subjectively *pure reverence* for the law as a principle of action. Thus there arises the maxim, to obey the moral law even at the sacrifice of all my natural inclinations.

The supreme good which we call moral can therefore be nothing but the *idea of the law* in itself, in so far as it is this idea which determines the will, and not any consequences that are expected to follow. Only a *rational* being can have such an idea, and hence a man who acts from the idea of the law is already morally good, no matter whether the consequences which he expects from his action follow or not.

Now what must be the nature of a law, the idea of which is to determine the will, even apart from the effects expected to follow, and which is therefore itself entitled to be called good absolutely and without qualification? As the will must not be moved to act from any desire for the results expected to follow from obedience to a certain law, the only principle of the will which remains is that of the conformity of actions to universal law. In all cases I must act in such a way *that I can at the same time will that my maxim should become a universal law*. This is what is meant by conformity to law pure and simple; and this is the principle which serves, and must serve, to determine the will, if the idea of duty is not to be regarded as empty and chimerical. As a matter of

fact the judgments which we are wont to pass upon conduct perfectly agree with this principle, and in making them we always have it before our eyes.

May I, for instance, under the pressure of circumstances, make a promise which I have no intention of keeping? The question is not, whether it is prudent to make a false promise, but whether it is morally right. To enable me to answer this question shortly and conclusively, the best way is for me to ask myself whether it would satisfy me that the maxim to extricate myself from embarrassment by giving a false promise should have the force of a universal law, applying to others as well as to myself. And I see at once, that, while I can certainly will the lie, I cannot will that lying should be a universal law. If lying were universal, there would, properly speaking, be no promises whatever. I might say that I intended to do a certain thing at some future time, but nobody would believe me, or if he did at the moment trust to my promise, he would afterwards pay me back in my own coin. My maxim thus proves itself to be self-destructive, so soon as it is taken as a universal law.

Duty, then, consists in the obligation to act from *pure* reverence for the moral law. To this motive all others must give way, for it is the condition of a will which is good *in itself*, and which has a value with which nothing else is comparable.

There is, however, in man a strong feeling of antagonism to the commands of duty, although his reason tells him that those commands are worthy of the highest reverence. For man not only possesses reason, but he has certain natural wants and inclinations, the complete satisfaction of which he calls happiness. These natural inclinations clamorously demand to have their seemingly reasonable claims respected; but reason issues its commands inflexibly, refusing to promise anything to the natural desires, and treating their claims with a sort of neglect and contempt. From this there arises

a *natural dialectic*, that is, a disposition to explain away the strict laws of duty, to cast doubt upon their validity, or at least, upon their purity and stringency, and in this way to make them yield to the demands of the natural inclinations.

Thus men are forced to go beyond the narrow circle of ideas within which their reason ordinarily moves, and to take a step into the field of *moral philosophy*, not indeed from any perception of speculative difficulties, but simply on practical grounds. The practical reason of men cannot be long exercised any more than the theoretical, without falling insensibly into a dialectic, which compels it to call in the aid of philosophy; and in the one case as in the other, rest can be found only in a thorough criticism of human reason.

## SECTION II.—TRANSITION FROM POPULAR MORAL PHILOSOPHY TO THE METAPHYSIC OF MORALITY

So far, we have drawn our conception of duty from the manner in which men employ it in the ordinary exercise of their practical reason. The conception of duty, however, we must not suppose to be therefore derived from experience. On the contrary, we hear frequent complaints, the justice of which we cannot but admit, that no one can point to a single instance in which an action has undoubtedly been done purely from a regard for duty; that there are certainly many actions which are not *opposed* to duty, but none which are indisputably done *from* duty and therefore have a moral value. Nothing indeed can secure us against the complete loss of our ideas of duty, and maintain in the soul a well-grounded respect for the moral law, but the clear conviction, that reason issues its commands on its own authority, without caring in the least whether the actions of men have, as a matter of fact, been done purely from ideas of duty. For reason commands inflexibly that certain actions should be done, which perhaps never have been done; actions, the

very possibility of which may seem doubtful to one who bases everything upon experience. Perfect disinterestedness in friendship, for instance, is demanded of every man, although there may never have been a sincere friend; for pure friendship is bound up with the idea of duty as duty, and belongs to the very idea of a reason which determines the will on *a priori* grounds, prior to all experience.

It is, moreover, beyond dispute, that unless we are to deny to morality all truth and all reference to a possible object, the moral law has so wide an application that it is binding, not merely upon man, but upon all *rational beings*, and not merely under certain contingent conditions, and with certain limitations, but absolutely and necessarily. And it is plain, that no experience could ever lead us to suppose that laws of this apodictic character are even possible.

There is, therefore, no genuine supreme principle of morality, which is not independent of all experience, and based entirely upon pure reason. If, then, we are to have a philosophy of morality at all, as distinguished from a popular moral philosophy, we may take it for granted without further investigation, that moral conceptions, together with the principles which flow from them, are given *a priori* and must be presented in their generality (*in abstracto*).

Such a metaphysic of morality, which must be entirely free from all admixture of empirical psychology, theology, physics and hyperphysics, and above all from all occult or, as we may call them, hypophysical qualities, is not only indispensable as a foundation for a sound theory of duties, but it is also of the highest importance in the practical realization of moral precepts. For the pure idea of duty, unmixed with any foreign ingredient of sensuous desire, in a word, the idea of the moral law, influences the heart of man much more powerfully through his reason, which in this way only becomes conscious that it can of itself be practical, than do all the motives which have their source in experience. Conscious



of its own dignity, the moral law treats all sensuous desires with contempt, and is able to master them one by one.

From what has been said it is evident, that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin in reason entirely *a priori*, and are apprehended by the ordinary reason of men as well as by reason in its purely speculative activity. We have also seen that it is of the greatest importance, not only in the construction by speculative reason of a theory of morality, but also with a view to the practical conduct of life, to derive the conceptions and laws of morality from pure reason, to present them pure and unmixed, and to mark out the sphere of this whole practical or pure knowledge of reason. Nor is it permissible, in seeking to determine the whole faculty of pure practical reason, to make its principles dependent upon the peculiar nature of human reason, as we were allowed to do, and sometimes were even forced to do, in speculative philosophy; for moral laws must apply to every rational being, and must therefore be derived from the very conception of a rational being as such.

To show the need of advancing not only from the common moral judgments of men to the philosophical, but from a popular philosophy, which merely gropes its way by the help of examples, to a metaphysic of morality, we must begin at the point where the practical faculty of reason supplies general rules of action, and exhibit clearly the steps by which it attains to the conception of duty.

Everything in nature acts in conformity with law. Only a rational being has the faculty of acting in conformity with the *idea* of law, or from principles; only a rational being, in other words, has a will. And as without reason actions cannot proceed from laws, will is simply practical reason. If the will is infallibly determined by reason, the actions of a rational being are subjectively as well as objectively necessary; that is, will must be regarded as a faculty of choosing *that only* which reason, independently of natural inclination, de-

clares to be practically necessary or good. On the other hand, if the will is not invariably determined by reason alone, but is subject to certain subjective conditions or motives, which are not always in harmony with the objective conditions; if the will, as actually is the case with man, is not in perfect conformity with reason; actions which are recognized to be objectively necessary, are subjectively contingent. The determination of such a will according to objective laws is therefore called *obligation*. That is to say, if the will of a rational being is not absolutely good, we conceive of it as capable of being determined by objective laws of reason, but not as by its very nature necessarily obeying them.

The idea that a certain principle is objective, and binding upon the will, is a command of reason, and the statement of the command in a formula is an *imperative*.

All imperatives are expressed by the word *ought*, to indicate that the will upon which they are binding is not by its subjective constitution necessarily determined in conformity with the objective law of reason. An imperative says, that the doing, or leaving undone of a certain thing would be good, but it addresses a will which does not always do a thing simply because it is good. Now, that is practically *good* which determines the will by ideas of reason, in other words, that which determines it, not by subjective influences, but by principles which are objective, or apply to all rational beings as such. *Good* and *pleasure* are quite distinct. Pleasure results from the influence of purely subjective causes upon the will of the subject, and these vary with the susceptibility of this or that individual, while a principle of reason is valid for all.

A perfectly good will would, like the will of man, stand under objective laws, laws of the good, but it could not be said to be under an *obligation* to act in conformity with those laws. Such a will by its subjective constitution could be de-

terminated only by the idea of the good. In reference to the Divine will, or any other holy will, imperatives have no meaning; for here the will is by its very nature necessarily in harmony with the law, and therefore *ought* has no application to it. Imperatives are formulae, which express merely the relation of objective laws of volition in general to the imperfect will of this or that rational being, as for instance, the will of man.

Now, all imperatives command either *hypothetically* or *categorically*. A hypothetical imperative states that a certain thing must be done, if something else which is willed, or at least might be willed, is to be attained. The categorical imperative declares that an act is in itself or objectively necessary, without any reference to another end.

Every practical law represents a possible action as good, and therefore as obligatory for a subject that is capable of being determined to act by reason. Hence all imperatives are formulae for the determination of an action which is obligatory according to the principle of a will that is in some sense good. If the action is good only because it is a means to *something else*, the imperative is *hypothetical*; if the action is conceived to be good *in itself*, the imperative, as the necessary principle of a will that in itself conforms to reason, is *categorical*.

An imperative, then, states what possible action of mine would be good. It supplies the practical rule for a will which does not at once do an act simply because it is good, either because the subject does not know it to be good, or because, knowing it to be good, he is influenced by maxims which are opposed to the objective principles of a practical reason.

The hypothetical imperative says only that an action is good relatively to a certain *possible* end or to a certain *actual* end. In the former case it is *problematic*, in the latter case *assertoric*. The categorical imperative, which affirms that an action is in itself or objectively necessary without

regard to an end, that is, without regard to any other end than itself, is an *apodictic* practical principle.

Whatever is within the power of a rational being may be conceived to be capable of being willed by some rational being, and hence the principles which determine what actions are necessary in the attainment of certain possible ends, are infinite in number.

Yet there is one thing which we may assume that all finite rational beings actually make their end, and there is therefore one object which may safely be regarded, not simply as something that they *may* seek, but as something that by a necessity of their nature they actually *do* seek. This object is *happiness*. The hypothetical imperative, which affirms the practical necessity of an action as the means of attaining happiness, is *assertoric*. We must not think of happiness as simply a possible and problematic end, but as an end that we may with confidence presuppose *a priori* to be sought by everyone, belonging as it does to the very nature of man. Now skill in the choice of means to his own greatest well-being may be called *prudence*, taking the word in its more restricted sense. An imperative, therefore, which relates merely to the choice of means to one's own happiness, that is, a maxim of prudence, must be hypothetical; it commands an action, not absolutely, but only as a means to another end.

Lastly, there is an imperative which directly commands an action, without presupposing as its condition that some other end is to be attained by means of that action. This imperative is *categorical*. It has to do, not with the matter of an action and the result expected to follow from it, but simply with the form and principle from which the action itself proceeds. The action is essentially good if the motive of the agent is good, let the consequences be what they may. This imperative may be called the imperative of *morality*.

How are all these imperatives possible? The question is not, How is an action which an imperative commands ac-

tually realized? but, How can we think of the will as placed under obligation by each of those imperatives? Very little need be said to show how an imperative of skill is possible. He who wills the end, wills also the means in his power which are indispensable to the attainment of the end. Looking simply at the act of will, we must say that this proposition is analytic. If a certain object is to follow as an effect from my volition, my causality must be conceived as active in the production of the effect, or as employing the means by which the effect will take place. The imperative, therefore, simply states that in the conception of the willing of this end there is directly implied the conception of actions necessary to this end. No doubt certain synthetic propositions are required to determine the particular means by which a given end may be attained, but these have nothing to do with the principle or act of the will, but merely state how the object may actually be realized.

Were it as easy to give a definite conception of happiness as of a particular end, the imperatives of prudence would be of exactly the same nature as the imperatives of skill, and would therefore be analytic. For, we should be able to say, that he who wills the end wills also the only means in his power for the attainment of the end. But, unfortunately, the conception of happiness is so indefinite, that, although every man desires to obtain it, he is unable to give a definite and self-consistent statement of what he actually desires and wills. The truth is, that, strictly speaking, the imperatives of prudence are not commands at all. They do not say that actions are objective or *necessary*, and hence they must be regarded as counsels (*consilia*), not as commands (*praecepta*) of reason. Still, the imperative of prudence would be an analytic proposition, if the means to happiness could only be known with certainty. For the only difference in the two cases is that in the imperative of skill the end is merely possible, in the imperative of prudence it is actually given; and

as in both all that is commanded is the means to an end which is assumed to be willed, the imperative which commands that he who wills the end should also will the means, is in both cases analytic. There is therefore no real difficulty in seeing how an imperative of prudence is possible.

The only question which is difficult of solution, is, how the imperative of morality is possible. Here the imperative is not hypothetical, and hence we cannot derive its objective necessity from any presupposition. Nor must it for a moment be forgotten, that an imperative of this sort cannot be established by instances taken from experience. We must therefore find out by careful investigation, whether imperatives which seem to be categorical may not be simply hypothetical imperatives in disguise.

One thing is plain at the very outset, namely, that only a categorical imperative can have the dignity of a practical *law*, and that the other imperatives, while they may no doubt be called *principles* of the will, cannot be called laws. An action which is necessary merely as a means to an arbitrary end, may be regarded as itself contingent, and if the end is abandoned, the maxim which prescribes the action has no longer any force. An unconditioned command, on the other hand, does not permit the will to choose the opposite, and therefore it carries with it the necessity which is essential to a law.

It is, however, very hard to see how there can be a categorical imperative or law of morality at all. Such a law is an *a priori* synthetic proposition, and we cannot expect that there will be less difficulty in showing how a proposition of that sort is possible in the sphere of morality than we have found it to be in the sphere of knowledge.

In attempting to solve this problem, we shall first of all inquire, whether the mere conception of a categorical imperative may not perhaps supply us with a formula, which contains the only proposition that can possibly be a categor-

ical imperative. The more difficult question, how such an absolute command is possible at all, will require a special investigation, which must be postponed to the last section.

If I take the mere conception of a hypothetical imperative, I cannot tell what it may contain until the condition under which it applies is presented to me. But I can tell at once from the very conception of a categorical imperative what it must contain. Viewed apart from the law, the imperative simply affirms that the maxim, or subjective principle of action, must conform to the objective principle or law. Now the law contains no condition to which it is restricted, and hence nothing remains but the statement, that the maxim ought to conform to the universality of the law as such. It is only this conformity to law that the imperative can be said to represent as necessary.

There is therefore but one categorical imperative, which may be thus stated: *Act in conformity with that maxim, and that maxim only, which you can at the same time will to be a universal law.*

Now, if from this single imperative, as from their principle, all imperatives of duty can be derived, we shall at least be able to indicate what we mean by the categorical imperative and what the conception of it implies, although we shall not be able to say whether the conception of duty may not itself be empty.

The universality of the law which governs the succession of events, is what we mean by *nature*, in the most general sense, that is, the existence of things, in so far as their existence is determined in conformity with universal laws. The universal imperative of duty might therefore be put in this way: *Act as if the maxim from which you act were to become through your will a universal law of nature.*

If we attend to what goes on in ourselves in every transgression of a duty, we find that we do not will that our maxim should become a universal law. We find it in fact

impossible to do so, and we really will that the opposite of our maxim should remain a universal law, at the same time that we assume the liberty of making an exception in favour of natural inclination in our own case, or perhaps only for this particular occasion. Hence, if we looked at all cases from the same point of view, that is, from the point of view of reason, we should see that there was here a contradiction in our will. The contradiction is, that a certain principle is admitted to be necessary objectively or as a universal law, and yet is held not to be universal subjectively, but to admit of exceptions. What we do is to consider our action at one time from the point of view of a will that is in perfect conformity with reason, and at another time from the point of view of a will that is under the influence of natural inclination. There is, therefore, here no real contradiction, but merely an antagonism of inclination to the command of reason. The universality of the principle is changed into a mere generality, in order that the practical principle of reason may meet the maxim half way. Not only is this limitation condemned by our own impartial judgment, but it proves that we actually recognize the validity of the categorical imperative, and merely allow ourselves to make a few exceptions in our own favour which we try to consider as of no importance, or as a necessary concession to circumstances.

This much at least we have learned, that if the idea of duty is to have any meaning and to lay down the laws of our actions, it must be expressed in categorical and not in hypothetical imperatives. We have also obtained a clear and distinct conception (a very important thing), of what is implied in a categorical imperative which contains the principle of duty for all cases, granting such an imperative to be possible at all. But we have not yet been able to prove *a priori*, that there actually is such an imperative; that there



is a practical law which commands absolutely on its own authority, and is independent of all sensuous impulses; and that duty consists in obedience to this law.

In seeking to reach this point, it is of the greatest importance to observe, that the reality of this principle cannot possibly be derived from the *peculiar constitution of human nature*. For by duty is meant the practically unconditioned necessity of an act, and hence we can show that duty is a law for the will of all human beings, only by showing that it is applicable to all rational beings, or rather to all rational beings to whom an imperative applies at all.

The question, then, is this: Is it a necessary law *for all rational beings*, that they must always estimate the value of their actions by asking whether they can will that their maxims should serve as universal laws? If there is such a law, it must be possible to prove entirely *a priori*, that it is bound up with the very idea of the will of a rational being. To show that there is such a connection we must, however reluctantly, take a step into the realm of metaphysic; not, however, into the realm of speculative philosophy, but into the metaphysic of morality. For we have here to deal with objective practical laws, and therefore with the relation of the will to itself, in so far as it is determined purely by reason. All relation of the will to what is empirical is excluded as a matter of course, for if reason determines the relation *entirely by itself*, it must necessarily do so *a priori*.

Will is conceived of as a faculty of determining itself to action *in accordance with the idea of certain laws*. Such a faculty can belong only to a rational being. Now that which serves as an objective principle for the self-determination of the will is an *end*, and if this end is given purely by reason, it must hold for all rational beings. On the other hand, that which is merely the condition of the possibility of an action the effect of which is the end, is called the *means*. The sub-

jective ground of desire is natural inclination, the objective ground of volition is a motive; hence there is a distinction between subjective ends, which depend upon natural inclination, and objective ends, which are connected with motives that hold for every rational being. Practical principles that abstract from all subjective ends are *formal*; those that presuppose subjective ends, and therefore natural inclinations, are *material*. The ends which a rational being arbitrarily sets before himself as material ends to be produced by his actions, are all merely relative; for that which gives to them their value is simply their relation to the peculiar susceptibility of the subject. They can therefore yield no universal and necessary principles, or practical laws, applicable to all rational beings, and binding upon every will. Upon such relative ends, therefore, only hypothetical imperatives can be based.

Suppose, however, that there is something the existence of which has in itself an absolute value, something which, *as an end in itself*, can be a ground of definite laws; then, there would lie in that, and only in that, the ground of a possible categorical imperative or practical law.

Now, I say, that man, and indeed every rational being as such, *exists* as an end in himself, *not merely as a means* to be made use of by this or that will, and therefore man in all his actions, whether these are directed towards himself or towards other rational beings, must always be regarded as an end. No object of natural desire has more than a conditioned value; for if the natural desires, and the wants to which they give rise, did not exist, the object to which they are directed would have no value at all. So far are the natural desires and wants from having an absolute value, so far are they from being sought simply for themselves, that every rational being must wish to be entirely free from their influence. The value of every object which human action is the means of obtaining, is, therefore, always conditioned.

And even beings whose existence depends upon nature, not upon our will, if they are without reason, have only the relative value of means, and are therefore called *things*. Rational beings, on the other hand, are called *persons*, because their very nature shows them to be ends in themselves, that is, something which cannot be made use of simply as a means. A person being thus an object of respect, a certain limit is placed upon arbitrary will. Persons are not purely subjective ends, whose existence has a value *for us* as the effect of our actions, but they are *objective ends*, or beings whose existence is an end in itself, for which no other end can be substituted. If all value were conditioned, and therefore contingent, it would be impossible to show that there is any supreme practical principle whatever.

If, then, there is a supreme practical principle, a principle which in relation to the human will is a categorical imperative, it must be an *objective* principle of the will, and must be able to serve as a universal practical law. For, such a principle must be derived from the idea of that which is necessarily an end for everyone because it is an *end in itself*. Its foundation is this, that *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. Man necessarily conceives of his own existence in this way, and so far this is a *subjective* principle of human action. But in this way also every other rational being conceives of his own existence, and for the very same reason; hence the principle is also *objective*, and from it, as the highest practical ground, all laws of the will must be capable of being derived. The practical imperative will therefore be this: *Act so as to use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end, never as merely a means.*

The principle, that humanity and every rational nature is an end in itself, is not borrowed from experience. For, in the first place, because of its universality it applies to all rational beings, and no experience can apply so widely. In the

second place, it does not regard humanity subjectively, as an end of man, that is, as an object which the subject of himself actually makes his end, but as an objective end, which ought to be regarded as a law that constitutes the supreme limiting condition of all subjective ends, and which must therefore have its source in pure reason. The objective ground of all practical laws consists in the *rule* and the form of universality, which makes them capable of serving as laws, but their *subjective* ground consists in the *end* to which they are directed. Now, by the second principle, every rational being, as an end in himself, is the subject of all ends. From this follows the third practical principle of the will, which is the supreme condition of its harmony with universal practical reason, namely, the idea of *the will of every rational being as a will which lays down universal laws of action*.

This formula implies, that a will which is itself the supreme lawgiver cannot possibly act from interest of any sort in the law, although no doubt a will may stand under the law, and may yet be attached to it by the bond of interest.

At the point we have now reached, it does not seem surprising that all previous attempts to find out the principle of morality should have ended in failure. It was seen that man is bound under law by duty, but it did not strike anyone, that the *universal* system of laws to which he is subject are laws which he *imposes upon himself*, and that he is only under obligation to act in conformity with his own will, a will which by the purpose of nature prescribes universal laws. Now so long as man is thought to be merely subject to law, no matter what the law may be, he must be regarded as stimulated or constrained to obey the law from interest of some kind; for as the law does not proceed from *his own* will, there must be *something external* to his will which compels him to act in conformity with it. This perfectly neces-

sary conclusion frustrated every attempt to find a supreme principle of duty. Duty was never established, but merely the necessity of acting from some form of interest, private or public. The imperative was therefore necessarily always conditioned, and could not possibly have the force of a moral command. The supreme principle of morality I shall therefore call the principle of the *autonomy* of the will, to distinguish it from all other principles, which I call principles of *heteronomy*.

The conception that every rational being in all the maxims of his will must regard himself as prescribing universal laws, by reference to which himself and all his actions are to be judged, leads to a cognate and very fruitful conception, that of a *kingdom of ends*.

By *kingdom*, I mean the systematic combination of different rational beings through the medium of common laws. Now, laws determine certain ends as universal, and hence, if abstraction is made from the individual differences of rational beings, and from all that is peculiar to their private ends, we get the idea of a complete totality of ends combined in a system; in other words, we are able to conceive of a kingdom of ends, which conforms to the principles formulated above.

All rational beings stand under the law, that each should treat himself and others, *never simply as means*, but always as *at the same time ends in themselves*. Thus there arises a systematic combination of rational beings through the medium of common objective laws. This may well be called a kingdom of ends, because the object of those laws is just to relate all rational beings to one another as ends and means. Of course this kingdom of ends is merely an ideal.

Morality, then, consists in the relation of all action to the system of laws which alone makes possible a kingdom of ends. These laws must belong to the nature of every rational being, and must proceed from his own will. The principle of

the will, therefore, is, that no action should be done from any other maxim than one which is consistent with a universal law. This may be expressed in the formula: *Act so that the will may regard itself as in its maxims laying down universal laws.* Now, if the maxims of rational beings are not by their very nature in harmony with this objective principle, the principle of a universal system of laws, the necessity of acting in conformity with that principle is called practical obligation or *duty*. No doubt duty does not apply to the sovereign will in the kingdom of ends, but it applies to every member of it, and to all in equal measure. *Autonomy* is thus the foundation of the moral value of man and of every other rational being.

The three ways in which the principle of morality has been formulated are at bottom simply different statements of the same law, and each implies the other two.

An absolutely good will, then, the principle of which must be a categorical imperative, will be undetermined as regards all objects, and will contain merely the *form of volition* in general, a form which rests upon the *autonomy* of the will. The one law which the will of every rational being imposes upon itself, and imposes without reference to any natural impulse or any interest, is, that the maxims of every good will must be capable of being made a universal law.

How *such an a priori synthetic practical proposition is possible*, and why it is necessary, is a problem which it is not the task of a metaphysic of morality to solve. We have not even affirmed it to be true, much less have we attempted to prove its truth. To prove that practical reason is capable of being employed synthetically, and that morality is not a mere fiction of the brain, requires us to enter upon a criticism of the faculty of practical reason itself. In the next section we shall state the main points which must be proved in a Critique of Practical Reason, so far as is necessary for our present purpose.

SECTION III.—TRANSITION FROM THE METAPHYSIC OF MORALITY  
TO THE CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON*The Idea of Freedom as the Key to the Autonomy of  
the Will*

The *will* is the causality of living beings in so far as they are rational. *Freedom* is that causality in so far as it can be regarded as efficient without being *determined* to activity by any cause other than itself. Natural *necessity* is the property of all non-rational beings to be determined to activity by some cause external to themselves.

The definition of freedom just given is *negative*, and therefore it does not tell us what freedom is in itself; but it prepares the way for a *positive* conception of a more specific and more fruitful character. The conception of causality carries with it the conception of determination by law (*Gesetz*), for the effect is conceived as determined (*gesetzt*) by the cause. Hence freedom must not be regarded as lawless (*gesetzlos*), but simply as independent of laws of nature. A free cause does conform to unchangeable laws, but these laws are peculiar to itself; and, indeed, apart from law a free will has no meaning whatever. A necessary law of nature, as we have seen, implies the heteronomy of efficient causes; for no effect is possible at all, unless its cause is itself determined to activity by something else. What, therefore, can freedom possibly be but autonomy, that is, the property of the will to be a law to itself? Now, to say that the will in all its actions is a law to itself, is simply to say that its principle is, to act from no other maxim than that the object of which is itself as a universal law. But this is just the formula of the categorical imperative and the principle of morality. Hence a free will is the same thing as a will that conforms to moral laws.

If, then, we start from the presupposition of freedom of the will, we can derive morality and the principle of moral-

ly simply from an analysis of the conception of freedom. Yet the principle of morality, namely, that an absolutely good will is a will the maxim of which can always be taken as itself a universal law, is a synthetic proposition. For by no possibility can we derive this property of the maxim from an analysis of the conception of an absolutely good will. The transition from the conception of freedom to the conception of morality can be made only if there is a third proposition which connects the other two in a synthetic unity. The *positive* conception of freedom yields this third proposition, and not the conception of nature, in which a thing is related causally only to something else. What this third proposition is to which freedom points, and of which we have an *a priori* idea, can be made clear only after some preliminary investigation.

### *Freedom is a Property of all Rational Beings*

It cannot in any way be proved that the will of man is free, unless it can be shown that the will of all rational beings is free. For morality is a law for us only in so far as we are rational beings, and therefore it must apply to all rational beings. But morality is possible only for a free being, and hence it must be proved that freedom also belongs to the will of all rational beings. Now I say, that a being who cannot act *except under the idea of freedom*, must for that very reason be regarded as free so far as his actions are concerned. In other words, even if it cannot be proved by speculative reason that his will is free, all the laws that are inseparably bound up with freedom must be viewed by him as laws of his will. And I say, further, that we must necessarily attribute to every rational being that has a will the idea of freedom, because every such being always acts under that idea. A rational being we must conceive as having a reason that is practical, that is, a reason



that has causality with regard to its objects. Now, it is impossible to conceive of a reason which should be consciously biassed in its judgments by some influence from without, for the subject would in that case regard its judgments as determined, not by reason, but by a natural impulse. Reason must therefore regard itself as the author of its principles of action, and as independent of all external influences. Hence, as practical reason, or as the will of a rational being, it must be regarded by itself as free. The will of a rational being, in other words, can be his own will only if he acts under the idea of freedom, and therefore this idea must in the practical sphere be ascribed to all rational beings.

*The Interest connected with Moral Ideas*

We have at last succeeded in reducing the true conception of morality to the idea of freedom. This, however, does not prove that man actually is free, but only that, without presupposing freedom, we cannot conceive of ourselves as rational beings, who are conscious of causality with respect to our actions, that is, as endowed with will. We have also found that on the same ground all beings endowed with reason and will must determine themselves to action under the idea of their freedom.

From the presupposition of the idea of freedom there also followed the consciousness of a law of action, the law that our subjective principles of action, or maxims, must always be of such a character that they have the validity of objective or universal principles, and can be taken as universal laws imposed upon our will by ourselves. But why, it may be asked, should I subject myself to this principle simply as a rational being, and why, therefore, should all other beings who are endowed with reason come under the same principle? Admitting that I am not *forced* to do so by interest—which indeed would make a categorical imperative

impossible—yet I must *take* an interest in that principle and see how I come to subject myself to it.

It looks as if we had, strictly speaking, shown merely that in the idea of freedom the moral law must be presupposed in order to explain the principle of the autonomy of the will, without being able to prove the reality and objectivity of the moral law itself.

It must be frankly admitted, that there is here a sort of circle from which it seems impossible to escape. We assume that as efficient causes we are free, in order to explain how in the kingdom of ends we can be under moral laws; and then we think of ourselves as subject to moral laws, because we have ascribed to ourselves freedom of will. Freedom of will and self-legislation of will are both autonomy, and, therefore, they are conceptions which imply each other; but, for that very reason, the one cannot be employed to explain or to account for the other.

### *How is a Categorical Imperative Possible*

As an intelligence, a rational being views himself as a member of the intelligible world, and it is only as an efficient cause belonging to this world that he speaks of his own causality as *will*. On the other hand, he is conscious of himself as also a part of the world of sense, and in this connection his actions appear as mere phenomena which that causality underlies. Yet he cannot trace back his actions as phenomena to the causality of his will, because of that causality he has no knowledge; and he is thus forced to view them as if they were determined merely by other phenomena, that is, by natural desires and inclinations. Were a man a member only of the intelligible world, all his actions would be in perfect agreement with the autonomy of the will; were he merely a part of the world of sense, they would have to be regarded as completely subject to the natural law of

desire and inclination, and to the heteronomy of nature. The former would rest upon the supreme principle of morality, the latter upon that of happiness. But it must be observed that the intelligible world is *the condition of the world of sense*, and, therefore, of the laws of that world. And as the will belongs altogether to the intelligible world, it is the intelligible world that prescribes the laws which the will directly obeys. As an intelligence, I am therefore subject to the law of the intelligible world, that is, to reason, notwithstanding the fact that I belong on the other side of my nature to the world of sense. Now, as subject to reason, which in the idea of freedom contains the law of the intelligible world, I am conscious of being subject to the autonomy of the will. The laws of the intelligible world I must therefore regard as imperatives, and the actions conformable to this principle as duties.

The explanation of the possibility of categorical imperatives, then, is, that the idea of freedom makes me a member of the intelligible world. Were I a member of no other world, all my actions *would* as a matter of fact always conform to the autonomy of the will. But as I perceive myself to be also a member of the world of sense, I can say only, that my actions *ought* to conform to the autonomy of the will. The categorical *ought* is thus an *a priori* synthetic proposition. To my will as affected by sensuous desires, there is added synthetically the idea of my will as belonging to the intelligible world, and therefore as pure and self-determining. The will as rational is therefore the supreme condition of the will as sensuous. The method of explanation here employed is similar to that by which the categories were deduced. For the *a priori* synthetic propositions, which make all knowledge of nature possible, depend, as we have seen, upon the addition to perceptions of sense of the pure conceptions of understanding, which, in themselves, are nothing but the form of law in general.

*Limits of Practical Philosophy*

Freedom is only an *idea* of reason, and therefore its objective reality is doubtful. Thus there arises a dialectic of practical reason. The freedom ascribed to the will seems to stand in contradiction with the necessity of nature. It is, therefore, incumbent upon *speculative philosophy* at least to show that we think of man in one sense and relation when we call him free, and in another sense and relation when we view him as a part of nature, and as subject to its laws. But this duty is incumbent upon speculative philosophy only in so far as it has to clear the way for practical philosophy.

In *thinking* itself into the intelligible world, practical reason does not transcend its proper limits, as it would do if it tried to know itself directly by means of perception. In so thinking itself, reason merely conceives of itself negatively as *not* belonging to the world of sense, without giving any laws to itself in determination of the will. There is but a single point in which it is positive, namely, in the thought that freedom, though it is a negative determination, is yet bound up with a positive faculty, and, indeed, with a causality of reason which is called will. In other words, will is the faculty of so acting that the principle of action should conform to the essential nature of a rational motive, that is, to the condition that the maxim of action should have the universal validity of a law. Were reason, however, to derive an *object of will*, that is, a motive, from the intelligible world, it would transcend its proper limits, and would make a pretence of knowing something of which it knew nothing. The conception of an intelligible world is therefore merely a *point of view* beyond the world of sense, at which reason sees itself compelled to take its stand *in order to think itself as practical*. This conception would not be possible at all if the sensuous desires were sufficient to determine the action of man. It is necessary, because otherwise man would not be

conscious of himself as an intelligence, and, therefore, not as a rational cause acting through reason or operating freely. This thought undoubtedly involves the idea of an order and a system of laws other than the order and laws of nature, which concern only the world of sense. Hence it makes necessary the conception of an intelligible world, a world which comprehends the totality of rational beings as things in themselves. Yet it in no way entitles us to think of that world otherwise than in its *formal* condition, that is, to conceive of the maxims of the will as conformable to universal laws.

Reason would, therefore, completely transcend its proper limits, if it should undertake to *explain how* pure reason can be practical, or, what is the same thing, to explain *how* freedom is possible.

We can explain nothing but that which we can reduce to laws, the object of which can be presented in a possible experience. Freedom, however, is a mere idea, the objective reality of which can in no way be presented in accordance with laws of nature, and, therefore, not in any possible experience. It has merely the necessity of a presupposition of reason, made by a being who believes himself to be conscious of a will, that is, of a faculty distinct from mere desire. The most that we can do is to *defend* freedom by removing the objections of those who claim to have a deeper insight into the nature of things than we can pretend to have, and who, therefore, declare that freedom is impossible. It would no doubt be a contradiction to say that in its causality the will is entirely separated from all the laws of the sensible world. But the contradiction disappears, if we say, that behind phenomena there are things in themselves, which, though they are hidden from us, are the condition of phenomena; and that the laws of action of things in themselves naturally are not the same as the laws under which their phenomenal manifestations stand.

While, therefore, it is true that we cannot comprehend the practical unconditioned necessity of the moral imperative, it is also true that we can comprehend its *incomprehensibility*; and this is all that can fairly be demanded of a philosophy which seeks to reach the principles which determine the limits of human reason.

## CHAPTER XII

### BENTHAM AND MILL

NOT the theoretic flaws in preceding ethical thought merely, but the definite need of political reform in a land groaning from abuses led Jeremy Bentham (1748-1842) to devise a system of ethics without which reform was impossible. During his life time occurred the disastrous culmination of British abuse in America and the far greater calamity of the French Revolution. Had the governments in question but cared for the interests of their subjects instead of applying the principles of our old friend Callicles, the world might have lived as a happy family. But the king, the aristocracy, and the legal profession had tacitly banded together to protect and fortify privilege. The law had grown so cumbersome, so unintelligible, technicalities had so multiplied, judge-made law had so superseded written enactments, that any one of a hundred reasons was sufficient to thwart the just cause of an unprivileged person.

And what had the ethical philosophers done about it, except to permit the atrocious system to grow and spread? Their theoretical faults had obscured the issue. When Cumberland had appealed to eternal and immutable intuitions, he was dealing "in sounds instead of sense." A younger man, John Locke, the fountain head of all British philosophy, had shown that there were no such things as innate ideas. To base one's ethics on intuition was a step backward to the school of Descartes. The English lawyers, the aristocracy and the common people should learn once for all that the only basis on which to judge the moral worth of an act, be it the act of an individual or the act of the gov-

ernment, is its tendency to produce the greatest surplus of pleasure over pain for all the nation.

Other men had already said as much. Cumberland, a century before, had enunciated the principle. On the continent—and Bentham not only had quite a continental education but was recognized there as a political genius long before he became known in England—Montesquieu and Helvétius contributed to his development, and especially Beccaria, an Italian. The last had worked out the elements of the moral arithmetic for which Bentham is so well known. Hutcheson used the formula of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Hume knew of utility. But Bentham combined their suggestions, formed a school and actually initiated reforms in England, not to mention the sphere of his influence in other countries.<sup>1</sup>

Yet owing to the very fact that Bentham and his disciples achieved so much practically, it may turn out that their theory is not so greatly superior to others.

Underlying his activity is the aim to make morals and politics as accurate as physics. We recall that Aristotle considered such an aim to betray a lack of reflection, and this is but one of the points on which Bentham differs radically from that ancient authority. Pleasure is a very definite state of consciousness, its quantity can be scientifically measured. Thus one pleasure can be determined to be better or greater than another and one pain greater or worse than another. Units of pleasure and units of pain can be cancelled and the result, by revealing which of two or more lines of action will produce the greatest surplus of pleasure, will indicate which one is the right or moral action. The basis of morality may be a feeling but the method of distinguishing right from wrong is as rational as mathematics. Because both Hutcheson and Hume distinguish these by means of feeling

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* by Elie Halévy; *The English Utilitarians*, Vol. I, by Leslie Stephen.



rather than reason, Bentham, in making practical morality a rational problem, deviates from one group of predecessors and in making the problem as exact as arithmetic progresses beyond others.

Bentham's clarity of expression makes a minimum of explanatory material necessary. Easy comprehension of his system hastens the consideration of difficulties. The divergence between Bentham's view of ethics as an exact science and the Aristotelian position has been noted. We may pass to the alleged ambiguity of the terms pleasure and happiness. For Bentham no words could be more univocal. If a person does not know what makes him happy, or what pleases him, can he know anything? But speculation, from Plato's time till now apparently indicates that Bentham was over-optimistic. His disciple John Stuart Mill, a selection from whom immediately follows that from Bentham, will unintentionally illustrate this point. If pleasure be unambiguous, if it be so precise as to admit of arithmetic determination, Bentham becomes the greatest ethicist in the world's history. As a matter of fact, pleasure has never been so exactly measured yet. The assumption that all pleasures are commensurable, and that they are commensurable with all pains as well, remains to be demonstrated. Bentham at times doubted his own assumption, but knew not how to replace it. Mill denied the assumption. For him pleasure admits not only quantitative but also qualitative differentiation.

There is a further problem. In Bentham's ethics as in Hobbes', each man's course of life is determined by pleasure or by what he thinks will yield pleasure. Aside from pleasure there is really no motive to action. Nevertheless the morality of an act depends on its tendency to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But unless the happiness of all is consistent with one's personal happiness, why should one aim at the happiness of all? For theoretical purposes, Bentham seems to have assumed they

harmonize. But in the practical business of a reform movement it appears quite otherwise. When his principle of utility was called dangerous, he was puzzled until he reflected that utility might be dangerous to the power of privilege. On the whole Bentham was unconscious of the difficulty. Previous philosophers had not been. Paley, basing morality on pleasure, harmonized private and public pleasure by God's equalizing rewards and punishments in the future life. Bentham considered God's judgments only in so far as they caused physical results in the present world. Hume had made sympathy unite all people in a bond so strong that all their various interests were fused. Bentham, however, depends primarily on the artificial sanctions of the legislator. Then who is to control the legislator in creating the sanctions? Perhaps the voters. But perhaps the legislator may prove too strong and apply legal sanctions for his own ends.

On the whole, as we have said, Bentham was not concerned with the problem. Mill (1806-1873) after him, tried to unify the sole motive of personal pleasure and the utilitarian principle of pleasure for all in a feeling of the unity of humanity. John Austin, and still later Henry Sidgwick, which latter will long remain an outstanding figure in ethics, return in one way or another to the position of Paley and Butler, that God harmonizes the individual and the universal good.

Bentham's failure in this particular leads back to a final question which was mentioned in the chapter on Hobbes.

A scientific description of what men actually do, Hobbes and Bentham agree, leads to psychological hedonism—the doctrine that men seek their own pleasure only. But utilitarianism decides that man ought to seek the pleasure of the greatest number. Aside from the question raised through a conflict between the two pleasures, by what process may one step from a description of facts to a statement of what

ought to be? How can a normative science be generated from a descriptive basis? It may be, and it is Sidgwick's opinion, that utilitarianism is forced to an intuition which Bentham and Mill rejected in their predecessors.

## JEREMY BENTHAM: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS AND LEGISLATION

### Chapter I<sup>2</sup>

#### OF THE PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY

I. Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire: but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The *principle of utility* recognizes this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law. Systems which attempt to question it, deal in sounds instead of sense, in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light.

But enough of metaphor and declamation: it is not by such means that moral science is to be improved.

II. The principle of utility is the foundation of the present work: it will be proper therefore at the outset to give an explicit and determinate account of what is meant by it. By the principle of utility is meant that principle which ap-

<sup>2</sup> From *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Jeremy Bentham, Oxford, 1822.

proves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness. I say of every action whatsoever; and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government.

III. By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness, (all this in the present case comes to the same thing) or (what comes again to the same thing) to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness to the party whose interest is considered: if that party be the community in general, then the happiness of the community: if a particular individual, then the happiness of that individual.

IV. The interest of the community is one of the most general expressions that can occur in the phraseology of morals: no wonder that the meaning of it is often lost. When it has a meaning, it is this. The community is a fictitious *body*, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its *members*. The interest of the community then is, what?—the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.

V. It is in vain to talk of the interest of the community, without understanding what is the interest of the individual. A thing is said to promote the interest, or to be *for* the interest, of an individual, when it tends to add to the sum total of his pleasures: or, what comes to the same thing, to diminish the sum total of his pains.

VI. An action then may be said to be conformable to the principle of utility, or, for shortness sake, to utility, (meaning with respect to the community at large) when the tendency it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any it has to diminish it.

VII. A measure of government (which is but a particular kind of action, performed by a particular person or persons) may be said to be conformable to or dictated by the principle of utility, when in like manner the tendency which it has to augment the happiness of the community is greater than any which it has to diminish it.

VIII. When an action, or in particular a measure of government, is supposed by a man to be conformable to the principle of utility, it may be convenient, for the purposes of discourse, to imagine a kind of law or dictate, called a law or dictate of utility: and to speak of the action in question, as being conformable to such law or dictate.

IX. A man may be said to be a partizan of the principle of utility, when the approbation or disapprobation he annexes to any action, or to any measure, is determined by and proportioned to the tendency which he conceives it to have to augment or to diminish the happiness of the community: or in other words, to its conformity or unconformity to the laws or dictates of utility.

X. Of an action that is conformable to the principle of utility, one may always say either that it is one that ought to be done, or at least that it is not one that ought not to be done. One may say also, that it is right it should be done; at least that it is not wrong it should be done: that it is a right action; at least that it is not a wrong action. When thus interpreted, the words *ought*, and *right* and *wrong*, and others of that stamp, have a meaning: when otherwise, they have none.

XI. Has the rectitude of this principle been ever formally contested? It should seem that it had, by those who have not known what they have been meaning. Is it susceptible of any direct proof? it should seem not: for that which is used to prove everything else, cannot itself be proved: a chain of proofs must have their commencement somewhere. To give such proof is as impossible as it is needless.

XII. Not that there is or ever has been that human creature breathing, however stupid or perverse, who has not on many, perhaps on most occasions of his life, deferred to it. By the natural constitution of the human frame, on most occasions of their lives men in general embrace this principle, without thinking of it: if not for the ordering of their own actions, yet for the trying of their own actions, as well as of those of other men. There have been, at the same time, not many, perhaps, even of the most intelligent, who have been disposed to embrace it purely and without reserve. There are even few who have not taken some occasion or other to quarrel with it, either on account of their not understanding always how to apply it, or on account of some prejudice or other which they were afraid to examine into, or could not bear to part with. For such is the stuff that man is made of: in principle and in practice, in a right track and in a wrong one, the rarest of all human qualities is consistency.

XIII. When a man attempts to combat the principle of utility, it is with reasons drawn, without his being aware of it, from that very principle itself. His arguments, if they prove any thing, prove not that the principle is *wrong*, but that, according to the applications he supposes to be made of it, it is *misapplied*. Is it possible for a man to move the earth? Yes; but he must first find out another earth to stand upon.

XIV. To disprove the propriety of it by arguments is impossible; but, from the causes that have been mentioned, or from some confused or partial view of it, a man may happen to be disposed not to relish it. Where this is the case, if he thinks the settling of his opinions on such a subject worth the trouble, let him take the following steps, and at length, perhaps, he may come to reconcile himself to it.

1. Let him settle with himself, whether he would wish to discard this principle altogether; if so, let him consider

what it is that all his reasonings (in matters of politics especially) can amount to?

2. If he would, let him settle with himself, whether he would judge and act without any principle, or whether there is any other he would judge and act by?

3. If there be, let him examine and satisfy himself whether the principle he thinks he has found is really any separate intelligible principle; or whether it be not a mere principle in words, a kind of phrase, which at bottom expresses neither more nor less than the mere averment of his own unfounded sentiments; that is, what in another person he might be apt to call caprice?

4. If he is inclined to think that his own approbation or disapprobation, annexed to the idea of an act, without any regard to its consequences, is a sufficient foundation for him to judge and act upon, let him ask himself whether his sentiment is to be a standard of right and wrong, with respect to every other man, or whether every man's sentiment has the same privilege of being a standard to itself?

5. In the first case, let him ask himself whether his principle is not despotal, and hostile to all the rest of human race?

6. In the second case, whether it is not anarchial, and whether at this rate there are not as many different standards of right and wrong as there are men? and whether even to the same man, the same thing, which is right today, may not (without the least change in its nature) be wrong tomorrow? and whether the same thing is not right and wrong in the same place at the same time? and in either case, whether all argument is not at an end? and whether, when two men have said, "I like this," and "I don't like it," they can (upon such a principle) have any thing more to say?

7. If he should have said to himself, No: for that the

sentiment which he proposes as a standard must be grounded on reflection, let him say on what particulars the reflection is to turn? if on particulars having relation to the utility of the act, then let him say whether this is not deserting his own principle, and borrowing assistance from that very one in opposition to which he sets it up: or if not on those particulars, on what other particulars?

8. If he should be for compounding the matter, and adopting his own principle in part, and the principle of utility in part, let him say how far he will adopt it?

9. When he has settled with himself where he will stop, then let him ask himself how he justifies to himself the adopting it so far? and why he will not adopt it any farther?

10. Admitting any other principle than the principle of utility to be a right principle, a principle that it is right for a man to pursue; admitting (what is not true) that the word *right* can have a meaning without reference to utility, let him say whether there is any such thing as a *motive* that a man can have to pursue the dictates of it: if there is, let him say what that motive is, and how it is to be distinguished from those which enforce the dictates of utility: if not, then lastly let him say what it is this other principle can be good for?

### Chapter III

#### OF THE FOUR SANCTIONS OR SOURCES OF PAIN AND PLEASURE

I. It has been shown that the happiness of the individuals, of whom a community is composed, that is their pleasures and their security, is the end and the sole end which the legislator ought to have in view: the sole standard, in conformity to which each individual ought, as far as depends



upon the legislator, to be *made* to fashion his behaviour. But whether it be this or any thing else that is to be *done*, there is nothing by which a man can ultimately be *made* to do it, but either pain or pleasure. Having taken a general view of these two grand objects (*viz.* pleasure, and what comes to the same thing, immunity from pain) in the character of *final* causes; it will be necessary to take a view of pleasure and pain itself, in the character of *efficient* causes or means.

II. There are four distinguishable sources from which pleasure and pain are in use to flow: considered separately, they may be termed the *physical*, the *political*, the *moral*, and the *religious*: and inasmuch as the pleasures and pains belonging to each of them are capable of giving a binding force to any law or rule of conduct, they may all of them be termed *sanctions*.

III. If it be in the present life, and from the ordinary course of nature, not purposely modified by the interposition of the will of any human being, nor by any extraordinary interposition of any superior invisible being, that the pleasure or the pain takes place or is expected, it may be said to issue from or to belong to the *physical sanction*.

IV. If at the hands of a *particular* person or set of persons in the community, who under names correspondent to that of *judge*, are chosen for the particular purpose of dispensing it, according to the will of the sovereign or supreme ruling power in the state, it may be said to issue from the *political sanction*.

V. If at the hands of such *chance* persons in the community, as the party in question may happen in the course of his life to have concerns with, according to each man's spontaneous disposition, and not according to any settled or concerted rule, it may be said to issue from the *moral* or *popular sanction*.

VI. If from the immediate hand of a superior invisible

being, either in the present life, or in a future, it may be said to issue from the *religious sanction*.

VII. Pleasures or pains which may be expected to issue from the *physical, political, or moral sanctions*, must all of them be expected to be experienced, if ever, in the *present life*: those which may be expected to issue from the *religious sanction*, may be expected to be experienced either in the *present life* or in a *future*.

VIII. Those which can be experienced in the present life, can of course, be no others than such as human nature in the course of the present life is susceptible of: and from each of these sources may flow all the pleasures or pains of which, in the course of the present life, human nature is susceptible. With regard to these then (with which alone we have in this place any concern) those of them which belong to any one of those sanctions, differ not ultimately in kind from those which belong to any one of the other three: the only difference there is among them lies in the circumstances that accompany their production. A suffering which befalls a man in the natural and spontaneous course of things, shall be styled, for instance, a *calamity*; in which case, if it be supposed to befall him through any imprudence of his, it may be styled a punishment issuing from the physical sanction. Now this same suffering, if inflicted by the law, will be what is commonly called a *punishment*; if incurred for want of any friendly assistance, which the misconduct, or supposed misconduct, of the sufferer has occasioned to be withholden, a punishment issuing from the *moral* sanction; if through the immediate interposition of a particular providence, a punishment issuing from the religious sanction.

IX. A man's goods, or his person, are consumed by fire. If this happened to him by what is called an accident, it was a calamity: if by reason of his own imprudence (for instance, from his neglecting to put his candle out) it may be styled a punishment of the physical sanction: if it happened

to him by the sentence of the political magistrate, a punishment belonging to the political sanction; that is, what is commonly called a punishment: if for want of any assistance which his *neighbour* withheld from him out of some dislike to his *moral* character, a punishment of the *moral* sanction: if by an immediate act of *God's* displeasure, manifested on account of some *sin* committed by him, or through any distraction of mind, occasioned by the dread of such displeasure, a punishment of the *religious* sanction.

X. As to such of the pleasures and pains belonging to the religious sanction, as regard a future life, of what kind these may be we cannot know. These lie not open to our observation. During the present life they are matter only of expectation: and, whether that expectation be derived from natural or revealed religion, the particular kind of pleasure or pain, if it be different from all those which lie open to our observation, is what we can have no idea of. The best ideas we can obtain of such pains and pleasures are altogether unliquidated in point of quality. In what other respects our ideas of them *may* be liquidated will be considered in another place.

XI. Of these four sanctions the physical is altogether, we may observe, the ground-work of the political and the moral: so is it also of the religious, in as far as the latter bears relation to the present life. It is included in each of those other three. This may operate in any case, (that is, any of the pains or pleasures belonging to it may operate) independently of *them*: none of *them* can operate but by means of this. In a word, the powers of nature may operate of themselves; but neither the magistrate, nor men at large, *can* operate, nor is God in the case in question *supposed* to operate, but through the powers of nature.

XII. For these four objects, which in their nature have so much in common, it seemed of use to find a common name. It seemed of use, in the first place, for the convenience

of giving a name to certain pleasures and pains, for which a name equally characteristic could hardly otherwise have been found: in the second place, for the sake of holding up the efficacy of certain moral forces, the influence of which is apt not to be sufficiently attended to. Does the political sanction exert an influence over the conduct of mankind? The moral, the religious sanctions do so too. In every inch of his career are the operations of the political magistrate liable to be aided or impeded by these two foreign powers: who, one or other of them, or both, are sure to be either his rivals or his allies. Does it happen to him to leave them out in his calculations? he will be sure almost to find himself mistaken in the result. Of all this we shall find abundant proofs in the sequel of this work. It behoves him, therefore, to have them continually before his eyes; and that under such a name as exhibits the relation they bear to his own purposes and designs.

#### Chapter IV

##### VALUE OF A LOT OF PLEASURE OR PAIN, HOW TO BE MEASURED

I. Pleasures then, and the avoidance of pains, are the *ends* which the legislator has in view: it behoves him therefore to understand their *value*. Pleasures and pains are the *instruments* he has to work with: it behoves him therefore to understand their force, which is again, in other words, their value.

II. To a person considered *by himself*, the value of a pleasure or pain considered *by itself*, will be greater or less, according to the four following circumstances:

1. Its *intensity*.
2. Its *duration*.
3. Its *certainty* or *uncertainty*.
4. Its *propinquity* or *remoteness*.

III. These are the circumstances which are to be considered in estimating a pleasure or a pain considered each of them by itself. But when the value of any pleasure or pain is considered for the purpose of estimating the tendency of any *act* by which it is produced, there are two other circumstances to be taken into the account; these are,

5. Its *fecundity*, or the chance it has of being followed by sensations of the *same* kind: that is, pleasures, if it be a pleasure: pains, if it be a pain.

6. Its *purity*, or the chance it has of *not* being followed by sensations of the *opposite* kind: that is, pains, if it be a pleasure: pleasures, if it be a pain.

These two last, however, are in strictness scarcely to be deemed properties of the pleasure or the pain itself; they are not, therefore, in strictness to be taken into the account of the value of that pleasure or that pain. They are in strictness to be deemed properties only of the act, or other event, by which such pleasure or pain has been produced; and accordingly are only to be taken into the account of the tendency of such act or such event.

IV. To a *number* of persons, with reference to each of whom the value of a pleasure or a pain is considered, it will be greater or less, according to seven circumstances: to wit, the six preceding ones; viz.

1. Its *intensity*.
2. Its *duration*.
3. Its *certainty* or *uncertainty*.
4. Its *propinquity* or *remoteness*.
5. Its *fecundity*.
6. Its *purity*.

And one other; to wit:

7. Its *extent*; that is, the number of persons to whom it *extends*; or (in other words) who are affected by it.

V. To take an exact account then of the general tendency of any act, by which the interests of a community are af-

affected, proceed as follows: Begin with any one person of those whose interests seem most immediately to be affected by it: and take an account,

1. Of the value of each distinguishable *pleasure* which appears to be produced by it in the *first* instance.

2. Of the value of each *pain* which appears to be produced by it in the *first* instance.

3. Of the value of each pleasure which appears to be produced by it *after* the first. This constitutes the *fecundity* of the first *pleasure* and the *impurity* of the first *pain*.

4. Of the value of each *pain* which appears to be produced by it after the first. This constitutes the *fecundity* of the first *pain*, and the *impurity* of the first pleasure.

5. Sum up all the values of all the *pleasures* on the one side, and those of all the pains on the other. The balance, if it be on the side of pleasure, will give the *good* tendency of the act upon the whole, with respect to the interests of that *individual* person; if on the side of pain, the *bad* tendency of it upon the whole.

6. Take an account of the *number* of persons whose interests appear to be concerned; and repeat the above process with respect to each. *Sum up* the numbers expressive of the degrees of *good* tendency, which the act has, with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is *good* upon the whole: do this again with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is *good* upon the whole: do this again with respect to each individual, in regard to whom the tendency of it is *bad* upon the whole. Take the *balance*; which, if on the side of *pleasure*, will give the general *good tendency* of the act, with respect to the total number or community of individuals concerned; if on the side of pain, the general *evil tendency*, with respect to the same community.

VI. It is not to be expected that this process should be

strictly pursued previously to every moral judgment, or to every legislative or judicial operation. It may, however, be always kept in view: and as near as the process actually pursued on these occasions approaches to it, so near will such process approach to the character of an exact one.

VII. The same process is alike applicable to pleasure and pain, in whatever shape they appear: and by whatever denomination they are distinguished: to pleasure, whether it be called *good* (which is properly the cause or instrument of pleasure) or *profit* (which is distant pleasure, or the cause or instrument of distant pleasure), or *convenience*, or *advantage*, *benefit*, *emolument*, *happiness*, and so forth: to pain, whether it be called *evil*, (which corresponds to good) or *mischief*, or *inconvenience*, or *disadvantage*, or *loss*, or *unhappiness*, and so forth.

VIII. Nor is this a novel and unwarranted, any more than it is a useless theory. In all this there is nothing but what the practice of mankind, wheresoever they have a clear view of their own interest, is perfectly conformable to. An article of property, an estate in land, for instance, is valuable, on what account? On account of the pleasures of all kinds which it enables a man to produce, and what comes to the same thing the pains of all kinds which it enables him to avert. But the value of such an article of property is universally understood to rise or fall according to the length or shortness of the time which a man has in it: the certainty or uncertainty of its coming into possession: and the nearness or remoteness of the time at which, if at all, it is to come into possession. As to the *intensity* of the pleasures which a man may derive from it, this is never thought of, because it depends upon the use which each particular person may come to make of it; which cannot be estimated till the particular pleasures he may come to derive from it, or the particular pains he may come to exclude by

means of it, are brought to view. For the same reason, neither does he think of the *fecundity* or *purity* of those pleasures.

## JOHN STUART MILL: UTILITARIANISM

### WHAT UTILITARIANISM IS<sup>3</sup>

A passing remark is all that needs be given to the ignorant blunder of supposing that those who stand up for utility as the test of right and wrong, use the term in that restricted and merely colloquial sense in which utility is opposed to pleasure. An apology is due to the philosophical opponents of utilitarianism, for even the momentary appearance of confounding them with any one capable of so absurd a misconception; which is the more extraordinary, inasmuch as the contrary accusation, of referring everything to pleasure, and that too in its grossest form, is another of the common charges against utilitarianism: and, as has been pointedly remarked by an able writer, the same sort of persons, and often the very same persons, denounce the theory "as impracticably dry when the word utility precedes the word pleasure, and as too practicably voluptuous when the word pleasure precedes the word utility." Those who know anything about the matter are aware that every writer, from Epicurus to Bentham, who maintained the theory of utility, meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain; and instead of opposing the useful to the agreeable or the ornamental, have always declared that the useful means these, among other things. Yet the common herd, including the herd of writers, not only in newspapers and periodicals, but in books of weight and pretension, are perpetually fall-

<sup>3</sup> From *Utilitarianism*, J. S. Mill, Chapter II.



ing into this shallow mistake. Having caught up the word utilitarian, while knowing nothing whatever about it but its sound, they habitually express by it the rejection, or the neglect, of pleasure in some of its forms; of beauty, of ornament, or of amusement. Nor is the term thus ignorantly misapplied solely in disparagement, but occasionally in compliment; as though it implied superiority to frivolity and the mere pleasures of the moment. And this perverted use is the only one in which the word is popularly known, and the one from which the new generation are acquiring their sole notion of its meaning. Those who introduced the word, but who had for many years discontinued it as a distinctive appellation, may well feel themselves called upon to resume it, if by doing so they can hope to contribute anything towards rescuing it from this utter degradation.

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. To give a clear view of the moral standard set up by the theory, much more requires to be said; in particular, what things it includes in the ideas of pain and pleasure; and to what extent this is left an open question. But these supplementary explanations do not affect the theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded—namely, that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.

Now, such a theory of life excites in many minds, and among them in some of the most estimable in feeling and

purpose, inveterate dislike. To suppose that life has (as they express it) no higher end than pleasure—no better and nobler object of desire and pursuit—they designate as utterly mean and grovelling; as a doctrine worthy only of swine, to whom the followers of Epicurus were, at a very early period, contemptuously likened; and modern holders of the doctrine are occasionally made the subject of equally polite comparisons by its German, French, and English assailants.

When thus attacked, the Epicureans have always answered, that it is not they, but their accusers, who represent human nature in a degrading light; since the accusation supposes human beings to be capable of no pleasures except those of which swine are capable. If this supposition were true, the charge could not be gainsaid, but would then be no longer an imputation: for if the sources of pleasure were precisely the same to human beings and to swine, the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other. The comparison of the Epicurean life to that of beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conceptions of happiness. Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification. I do not, indeed, consider the Epicureans to have been by any means faultless in drawing out their scheme of consequences from the utilitarian principle. To do this in any sufficient manner, many Stoic, as well as Christian elements require to be included. But there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation. It must be admitted, however, that utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency, safety, uncostliness, etc.,

of the former—that is, in their circumstantial advantages rather than in their intrinsic nature. And on all these points utilitarians have fully proved their case; but they might have taken the other, and, as it may be called, higher ground, with entire consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact, that some *kinds* of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone.

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except it being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account.

Now it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, both, do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties. Few human creatures would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals, for a promise of the fullest allowance of a beast's pleasures; no intelligent human being would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would be an ignoramus, no person of feeling and conscience would be

selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs. They would not resign what they possess more than he, for the most complete satisfaction of all the desires which they have in common with him. If they ever fancy they would, it is only in cases of unhappiness so extreme, that to escape from it they would exchange their lot for almost any other, however undesirable in their own eyes. A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and is certainly accessible to it at more points, than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities, he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence. We may give what explanation we please of this unwillingness; we may attribute it to pride, a name which is given indiscriminately to some of the most and to some of the least estimable feelings of which mankind are capable; we may refer it to the love of liberty and personal independence, an appeal to which was with the Stoics one of the most effective means for the inculcation of it; to the love of power, or to the love of excitement, both of which do really enter into and contribute to it: but its most appropriate appellation is a sense of dignity, which all human beings possess in one form or other, and in some, though by no means in exact, proportion to their higher faculties, and which is so essential a part of the happiness of those in whom it is strong, that nothing which conflicts with it could be, otherwise than momentarily, an object of desire to them. Whoever supposes that this preference takes place at a sacrifice of happiness—that the superior being, in anything like equal circumstances, is not happier than the inferior—confounds the two very different ideas, of happiness, and content. It is indisputable that the being whose capacities of enjoyment are low, has the greatest chance of having them fully satisfied; and a highly-endowed being will always feel

that any happiness which he can look for, as the world is constituted, is imperfect. But he can learn to bear its imperfections, if they are at all bearable; and they will not make him envy the being who is indeed unconscious of the imperfections, but only because he feels not at all the good which those imperfections qualify. It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.

It may be objected, that many who are capable of the higher pleasures, occasionally, under the influence of temptation, postpone them to the lower. But this is quite compatible with a full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Men often, from infirmity of character, make their election for the nearer good, though they know it to be the less valuable; and this no less when the choice is between two bodily pleasures, than when it is between bodily and mental. They pursue sensual indulgences to the injury of health, though perfectly aware that health is the greater good. It may be further objected, that many who begin with youthful enthusiasm for everything noble, as they advance in years sink into indolence and selfishness. But I do not believe that those who undergo this very common change, voluntarily choose the lower description of pleasures in preference to the higher. I believe that before they devote themselves exclusively to the one, they have already become incapable of the other. Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position in life has devoted them, and the society into which it has thrown them, are not favourable to keeping that higher capacity in exercise. Men

lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access, or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying. It may be questioned whether any one who has remained equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures, ever knowingly and calmly preferred the lower; though many, in all ages, have broken down in an ineffectual attempt to combine both.

From this verdict of the only competent judges, I apprehend there can be no appeal. On a question which is the best worth having of two pleasures, or which of two modes of existence is the most grateful to the feelings, apart from its moral attributes and from its consequences, the judgment of those who are qualified by knowledge of both, or, if they differ, that of the majority among them, must be admitted as final. And there needs be the less hesitation to accept this judgment respecting the quality of pleasures, since there is no other tribunal to be referred to even on the question of quantity. What means are there of determining which is the acutest of two pains, or the intensest of two pleasurable sensations, except the general suffrage of those who are familiar with both? Neither pains nor pleasures are homogeneous, and pain is always heterogeneous with pleasure. What is there to decide whether a particular pleasure is worth purchasing at the cost of a particular pain, except the feelings and judgment of the experienced? When, therefore, those feelings and judgment declare the pleasures derived from the higher faculties to be preferable *in kind*, apart from the question of intensity, to those of which the animal nature, disjoined from the higher faculties, is susceptible, they are entitled on this subject to the same regard.

## CHAPTER XIII

T. H. GREEN

(1836-1882)

THE nineteenth century was a momentous one in British intellectual life. The empirical philosophy of Locke had already turned to skepticism in Hume, who could not so much as discover his soul if he had one. The Utilitarian philosophy, as we have seen in Bentham and Mill, accepted pleasure, quantitative or qualitative, as the essence of morality rather than salvation-seeking or soul-growing. Intuition could give self-evidence only where somebody was already on hand to dispute it, and conscience spoke more and more slyly as prudence rather than as the still small voice of duty. For not only had the empirical philosophy come to flower in Utilitarianism, but the Industrial Revolution was coming to maturity as capitalism, with men living on as well as for weekly wages. Economics could realistically describe men as Hobbes had imaginatively done—selfish creatures, buying as cheaply, selling as dearly, as possible. Civilization was rapidly becoming secular in its very texture, and such slips of understanding were possible as the reputed school boy's report upon the famous words of Admiral Nelson—"Every man expects England to do her duty."

Just past the middle of the century Darwin was articulating a long developing notion of the continuity of man with other animals. The sense of duty that had troubled the empiricists to explain, and had laid the foundation for rationalists, giving Kant a thrill next to the contemplation of the starry heavens, now had a longer time in which and out of

which to weave its natural history. What may not have happened during the innumerable eons in which man was being automatically fitted through lethal adjustment to his physical environment? Moral obligation may be but the dying echo of fear, outliving but never loving the stern commands of over-lords, or the vaguer prompting of ambition never satisfied by what is available, even though that be one's own self. If it be but an echo of the past, let history explain it; if it be but some discontented wail of a better-yet-to-be, let it exhaust itself by what it can achieve in action. At best it is a "serviceable illusion"; at worst a stain of half-remembered tyranny.

But if illusion, how serviceable; and if serviceable, how an illusion? Thus queries Thomas Hill Green in introducing his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, from which we are presently to quote. The fact of the feeling of duty leads him, as it led Kant before him, to re-survey the whole field of human nature and eventually to reconstruct the scientific picture of the universe. The major fact that gave him pause in conceiving the universe as made up of physical and chemical properties in unvarying sequences was his consciousness of these processes, yea his consciousness of himself. "Can the knowledge of nature be itself a part or product of nature?" Natural change does not know itself, and knowledge of change is not a part of the changing process; for if it were a part of the process, it could not know any process as a whole. There is, therefore, in man a principle not wholly natural. This principle makes knowledge possible; and in making it possible, it also suggests that a knowable universe cannot be wholly alien to our human nature and higher aspiration. Following the lead of Kant and the culmination of Hegel, Green works out along this line a metaphysics that he presents as the necessary supplement of English empiricism from Locke to Hume.

But his tenderer interest lies in correcting the weakness



of the pleasure philosophy as it came to fruition in Bentham and Mill. He re-inforces the point made emphatic by Butler that pleasure is not the object of desire, for pleasure comes only from an object that is antecedently desired. He deprives Bentham of the sum of pleasures, for the sum of pleasures is not itself a pleasure but a sum. He shows Mill not entitled to the distinction between qualities of pleasure, for one can have no standard (of higher and lower) *for* pleasure if pleasure *is* the only standard. But it is not enough to dethrone pleasure; every natural object must be dethroned. Else man is made a part of nature and his will a function at any given moment of his strongest desires. His consciousness of nature shows that he is not a part of nature; and so his moral striving must be for objects above the natural realm. But what objects are left? Man himself is left, and he can aim at his own betterment. The goal of moral effort is self-realization. Whatever objects man presents to himself become moral objects, for he aims not at them as such, but at his own satisfaction through them. No object of nature is a moral object, but any object of nature may become a moral object by a moral man's presenting it to himself as necessary to his satisfaction. The student may well be reminded by this beneficent device of Rousseau's equally convenient method of transforming a majority vote into the voice of the general will, i. e., by presenting each issue not as to its merit but as to its agreement with the general will. Pleasure itself may thus become an object of ethical endeavor, though it is no longer pleasure taken neat but the satisfaction of a moral man in pleasurable action. When man strives for no other objects than those which he presents to himself, his will is free; for it is self-determined.

The free will in willing its own perfection soon discovers that its good is not separate from but common to the good of others. And so the promotion of the institutions about us—the family, the church, the state—becomes the realiza-

tion of our own better selves. Our specific duties are determined by our several stations in life. But whence arise our notions of betterness? They arise somehow from our world. But since they always take the form of personal betterment, the universe itself must be conceived as personal. Our dreams of perfection are already the habits of the perfect being, who is God or the Absolute. The good man knows that he works not for naught; for aspirations that represent but possibilities to him are already actualities in the divine life. Thus Green comes at last through an approach that is more Grecian than Christian to a justification of Christian faith. While poetic disconsolates, like Tennyson, met the rising evolutionary temper with the hope that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill," and scientific expounders, like Herbert Spencer, paid deference to the spiritual only as the Unknowable, Green planted Idealism deep in English soil by declaring this Unknowable to be the most truly known and this hope of perfection to be daily actualized in the life of every moral man.

## PROLEGOMENA TO ETHICS<sup>1</sup>

### THE ETHICAL PROBLEM STATED

Our object has been to arrive at some conclusion in regard to the position in which man himself stands to the system of related phenomena called nature—in other words, in regard to the freedom of man; a conclusion on which the question of the possibility of Ethics, as other than a branch of physics, depends. Arguing, first, from the characteristics of his knowledge, postponing for the present the consideration of his moral achievement, our conclusion is that, while

<sup>1</sup> These selections are from the Fifth Edition, Impression of 1924. Oxford University Press. Footnotes are omitted and sub-heads added.

on the one hand his consciousness is throughout empirically conditioned,—in the sense that it would not be what at any time it is but for a series of events, sensible or related to sensibility, some of them events in the past history of consciousness, others of them events affecting the animal system organic to consciousness,—on the other hand his consciousness would not be what it is, *as knowing*, or as a subject of intelligent experience, but for the self-realisation or reproduction in it, through processes thus empirically conditioned, of an eternal consciousness, not existing in time but the condition of there being an order in time, not an object of experience but the condition of there being an intelligent experience, and in this sense not “empirical” but “intelligible” (p. 84).

As to what that consciousness in itself or in its completeness is, we can only make negative statements. *That* there is such a consciousness is implied in the existence of the world; but *what* it is we only know through its so far acting in us as to enable us, however partially and interruptedly, to have knowledge of a world or an intelligent experience (p. 58).

In virtue of his character as knowing, therefore, we are entitled to say that man is, according to a certain well-defined meaning of the term, a “free cause” (p. 84).

#### THE MORAL MOTIVE

The question whether this is so is the point really at issue in regard to the possibility and indispensableness of a Moral Philosophy which shall not be a branch of natural science; or, if we like to put it so, in regard to the freedom of moral agents. It is not the question commonly debated, with much ambiguity of terms, between “determinists” and “indeterminists”; not the question whether there is, or is not, a possibility of unmotivated willing; but the question

whether motives, of that kind by which it is the characteristic of moral or human action to be determined, are of properly natural origin or can be rightly regarded as natural phenomena.

If the foregoing analysis be correct, even those motives which lie nearest, so to speak, to animal wants are yet effectually distinguished from them and from any kind of natural phenomena. No one would pretend to find more than a strictly natural event either in any appetite or want incidental to the process of animal life, or in the effect of such a want in the way of an instinctive action directed to its satisfaction. But it is contended that such appetite or want does not constitute a motive proper, does not move to any distinctively human action, except as itself determined by a principle of other than natural origin. It only becomes a motive, so far as upon the want there supervenes the presentation of the want by a self-conscious subject to himself, and with it the idea of a self-satisfaction to be attained in the filling of the want (pp. 100-101).

The Ego identifies itself with some desire, and sets itself to bring into real existence the ideal object, of which the consciousness is involved in the desire. This constitutes an act of will; which is thus always free, not in the sense of being undetermined by a motive, but in the sense that the motive lies in the man himself, that he makes it and is aware of doing so, and hence, however he may excuse himself, imputes to himself the act which is nothing else than the expression of the motive (p. 115).

#### BUT HOW DOES MORAL DIFFER FROM IMMORAL

The ground upon which, rightly or wrongly, the reducibility of moral conduct to a series of natural phenomena, and with it the possibility of a physical science of ethics, is here denied, should by this time be sufficiently plain. It lies

in the view that in all conduct to which moral predicates are applicable a man is an object to himself; that such conduct, equally whether virtuous or vicious, expresses a motive consisting in an idea of personal good, which the man seeks to realise by action; and that the presentation of such an idea is not explicable by any series of events in time, but implies the action of an eternal consciousness which makes the processes of animal life organic to a particular reproduction of itself in man. The first impression of any one reading this statement may probably be that in our zeal to maintain a distinction of ethics from natural science we have adopted a view which, if significant and true, would take away the only intelligible foundation of ethics by reducing virtuous and vicious action to the same motive (p. 130).

Granted that, according to our doctrine, in all willing a self-conscious subject seeks to satisfy itself—seeks that which for the time it presents to itself as its good—how can there be any such intrinsic difference between the objects willed as justifies the distinction which “moral sense” seems to draw between good and bad action, between virtue and vice? And if there is such a difference, in what does it consist?

A possible answer to the question would of course be a denial that there is any such difference at all. By an *intrinsic* difference between the objects willed we mean a difference between them in respect of that which is the motive to the person willing them, as distinct from a difference constituted by any effect which the realisation of the object may bring about, but of which the anticipation does not form the motive. Now according to all strictly Hedonistic theories the difference between objects willed is, according to this sense of the terms, extrinsic, not intrinsic. The motive to the persons willing is supposed to be in all cases the same, *viz.* desire for some pleasure or aversion from some pain (pp. 177–178).

It will have appeared from the foregoing discussion that

the primary difference between the view here advanced and that of "Hedonistic" philosophers relates to the generic definition of the good—not only of the morally good, but of the good in the wider sense. Whereas with them the good generically is the pleasant, in this treatise the common characteristic of the good is that it satisfies some desire. In all satisfaction of desire there is pleasure, and thus pleasantness in an object is a necessary incident of its being good. We cannot think of an object as good, *i. e.* such as will satisfy desire, without thinking of it as in consequence such as will yield pleasure; but its pleasantness depends on its goodness, not its goodness upon the pleasure it conveys (p. 194).

Regarding the good generically as that which satisfies desire, but considering the objects we desire to be by no means necessarily pleasures, we shall naturally distinguish the moral good as that which satisfies the desire of a moral agent, or that in which a moral agent can find the satisfaction of himself which he necessarily seeks. The true good we shall understand in the same way. It is an end in which the effort of a moral agent can really find rest (pp. 195-196).

#### THE BETTER AS WITNESS OF THE BEST

We cannot indeed describe any state in which man, having become all that he is capable of becoming—all that, according to the divine plan of the world, he is destined to become—would find rest for his soul. We cannot conceive it under any forms borrowed from our actual experience, for our only experience of activity is of such as implies incompleteness. Of a life of completed development, of activity with the end attained, we can only speak or think in negatives, and thus only can we speak or think of that state of being in which, according to our theory, the ultimate moral good must consist. Yet the conviction that there must be such a state of being, merely negative as is our theoretical

apprehension of it, may have supreme influence over conduct, in moving us to that effort after the Better which, at least as a conscious effort, implies the conviction of there being a Best.

And when the speculative question is raised as to what this Best can be, we find that it has not left itself without a witness. The practical struggle after the Better, of which the idea of there being a Best has been the spring, has taken such effect in the world of man's affairs as makes the way by which the Best is to be the more nearly approached plain enough to him that will see. In the broad result it is not hard to understand how man has bettered himself through institutions and habits which tend to make the welfare of all the welfare of each, and through the arts which make nature, both as used and as contemplated, the friend of man. And just so far as this is plain, we know enough of ultimate moral good to guide our conduct; enough to judge whether the prevailing interests which make our character are or are not in the direction which tends further to realise the capabilities of the human spirit (pp. 196-197).

Proof of such a doctrine, in the ordinary sense of the word, from the nature of the case there cannot be. It is not a truth deducible from other established or conceded truths. It is not a statement of an event or matter of fact that can be the object of experiment or observation. It represents a conception to which no perceivable or imaginable object can possibly correspond, but one that affords the only means by which, reflecting on our moral and intellectual experience conjointly, taking the world and ourselves into account, we can put the whole thing together and understand how (not *why*, but *how*) we are and do, what we consciously are and do. Given this conception, and not without it, we can at any rate express that which it cannot be denied demands expression, the nature of man's reason and man's will, of human progress and human short-coming, of the effort after good

the failure to gain it, of virtue and vice, in their connection and in their distinction, in their essential opposition and in their no less essential unity (pp. 198-199).

#### THE GOOD MAN LIVES BY FAITH

How in particular and in detail that fulfilment is to be attained, we can only tell in so far as some progress has actually been made towards its attainment in the knowledge, arts, habits, and institutions through which man has so far become more at home in nature, and through which one member of the human family has become more able and more wishful to help another. But the condition of its further fulfilment is the will in some form or other to contribute to its fulfilment. And hence the differentia of the virtuous life, proceeding as it does from the same self-objectifying principle which we have just characterised as the source of the vicious life, is that it is governed by the consciousness of there being some perfection which has to be attained, some vocation which has to be fulfilled, some law which has to be obeyed, something absolutely desirable, whatever the individual may for the time desire; that it is in ministering to such an end that the agent seeks to satisfy himself. However meagrely the perfection, the vocation, the law may be conceived, the consciousness that there is such a thing, so far as it directs the will, must at least keep the man to the path in which human progress has so far been made. It must keep him loyal in the spirit to established morality, industrious in some work of recognised utility (pp. 200-201).

#### THE UNIVERSE MUST BE CONCEIVED AS PERSONAL

It is clearly of the very essence of the doctrine above advanced that the divine principle, which we suppose to be



realising itself in man, should be supposed to realise itself in persons, as such. But for reflection on our personality, on our consciousness of ourselves as objects to ourselves, we could never dream of there being such a self-realising principle at all, whether as implied in the world or in ourselves. It is only because we are consciously objects to ourselves, that we can conceive a world as an object to a single mind, and thus as a connected whole. It is the irreducibility of this self-objectifying consciousness to anything else, the impossibility of accounting for it as an effect, that compels us to regard it as the presence in us of the mind for which the world exists. To admit therefore that the self-realisation of the divine principle can take place otherwise than in a consciousness which is an object to itself, would be in contradiction of the very ground upon which we believe that a divine principle does so realise itself in man. Personality, no doubt, is a term that has often been fought over without any very precise meaning being attached to it. If we mean anything else by it than the quality in a subject of being consciously an object to itself, we are not justified in saying that it necessarily belongs to God and to any being in whom God in any measure reproduces or realises himself. But whatever we mean by personality, and whatever difficulties may attach to the notion that a divine principle realises itself through a qualifying medium in the persons of men, it is certain that we shall only fall into contradictions by substituting for persons, as the subjects in which the divine self-realisation takes place, any entity to which self-consciousness cannot intelligibly be ascribed. If it is impossible that the divine self-realisation should be complete in such persons as we are or can conceive ourselves coming to be, on the other hand in the absence of self-objectification, which is at least the essential thing in personality, it cannot even be inchoate (pp. 208-209).

When we speak of any subject as in process of development according to some law, we must mean, if we so speak advisedly, that that into which the subject is being developed already exists for some consciousness. We express the same thing by saying that the subject is something, in itself or potentially, which it has not yet in time actually become; and this again implies that in relation to some conscious being it is eternally that which in some other relation it is in time coming to be. A state of life or consciousness not yet attained by a subject capable of it, *in relation to that subject* we say *actually is not*; but if there were no consciousness for which it existed, there would be no sense in saying that *in possibility it is*, for it would simply be nothing at all. Thus, when we speak of the human spirit being in itself, or in possibility, something which is not yet realised in human experience, we mean that there is a consciousness for and in which this something really exists, though, on the other hand, for the consciousness which constitutes human experience it exists only in possibility.

It would not be enough to say "a consciousness *for* which it really exists." That might merely mean that this undeveloped capability of the human spirit existed as an object of consciousness to the eternal mind, in the same way in which facts that I contemplate exist for me. Such a statement would suffice, were the subject of development merely a natural organism. But when that which is being developed is itself a self-conscious subject, the end of its becoming must really exist not merely *for*, but *in* or *as*, a self-conscious subject. There must be eternally such a subject which is all that the self-conscious subject, as developed in time, has the possibility of becoming; in which the idea of the human spirit, or all that it has in itself to become, is completely realised. This consideration may suggest the true notion of the spiritual relation in which we stand to God; that He is not merely a Being who has made us, in the sense that we exist

as an object of the divine consciousness in the same way in which we must suppose the system of nature so to exist, but that He is a Being in whom we exist; with whom we are in principle one; with whom the human spirit is identical, in the sense that He is all which the human spirit is capable of becoming (pp. 214-216).

#### BUT HOW DOES SUCH FAITH OPERATE MORALLY

From the mere idea in man "of something, he knows not what, which he may and should become," to the actual practice which is counted morally good, it may naturally seem a long step. We have therefore to explain in further detail how such an idea, gradually taking form and definiteness, has been the moralising agent in human life, yielding our moral standards and inducing obedience to them.

Supposing such an idea to be operative in man, what must be the manner of its operation? It will keep before him an object, which he presents to himself as absolutely desirable, but which is other than any particular object of desire. Of this object it can never be possible for him to give a sufficient account, because it consists in the realisation of capabilities which can only be fully known in their ultimate realisation. At the same time, because it is the fulfilment of himself, of that which he has in him to be, it will excite an interest in him like no other interest, different in kind from any of his desires and aversions except such as are derived from it. It will be an interest as in an object conceived to be of unconditional value; one of which the value does not depend on any desire that the individual may at any time feel for it or for anything else, or on any pleasure that, either in its pursuit or in its attainment or as its result, he may experience. The conception of its desirableness will not arise, like the conception of the desirableness of any pleasure, from previous enjoyment of it or from reflection on the desire for it.

On the contrary, the desire for the object will be founded on a conception of its desirableness as a fulfilment of the capabilities of which a man is conscious in being conscious of himself.

In such men and at such times as a desire for it does actually arise—a desire in that sense which implies that the man puts himself forth for the realisation of the desired object—it will express itself in their imposition on themselves of rules requiring something to be done irrespectively of any inclination to do it, irrespectively of any desired end to which it is a means, *other than this end, which is desired because conceived as absolutely desirable* (pp. 221–222).

But, granted the conception of an unconditional good for man, with unconditioned rules of conduct which it suggests, what in particular will these rules enjoin? We have said that man can never give a sufficient account of what his unconditional good is, because he cannot know what his capabilities are till they are realised. This is the explanation of the infirmity that has always been found to attach to attempted definitions of the moral ideal. They are always open to the charge that there is employed in the definition, openly or disguisedly, the very notion which profession is made of defining. If, on being asked for an account of the unconditional good, we answer either that it is the good will or that to which the good will is directed, we are naturally asked further, what then is the good will? And if in answer to this question we can only say that it is the will for the unconditional good, we are no less naturally charged with “moving in a circle.” We do but slightly disguise the circular process without escaping from it if, instead of saying directly that the good will is the will for the unconditional good, we say that it is the will to conform to a universal law for its own sake or because it is conceived as a universal law; for the recognition of the authority of such a universal law must

be founded on the conception of its relation to an unconditional good (p. 223).

At the same time, then, that the categorical imperative can enjoin *nothing without liability to exception* but disinterested obedience to itself, it will have no lack of definite content. The particular duties which it enjoins will *at least* be all those in the practice of which, according to the hitherto experience of men, some progress is made towards the fulfilment of man's capabilities, or some condition necessary to that progress is satisfied. We say it will enjoin these *at least*, because particular duties must be constantly arising out of it for the individual, for which no formula can be found before they arise, and which are thus extraneous to the recognised code. Every one, however, of the duties which the law of state or the law of opinion recognises must in some way be relative to circumstances. The rule therefore in which it is conveyed, though stated in the most general terms compatible with real significance, must still admit of exceptions. Yet is there a true sense in which the whole system of such duties is unconditionally binding. It is so as an expression of the absolute imperative to seek the absolutely desirable, the ideal of humanity, the fulfilment of man's vocation. Because an expression (though an incomplete one) of this absolute imperative, because a product of the effort after such an unconditional good, the requirements of conventional morality, however liable they may be to exceptions, arising out of circumstances other than those to which they are properly applicable, are at least liable to no exception for the sake of the individual's pleasure. As against any desire but some form or other of that desire for the best in conduct, which will, no doubt, from time to time suggest new duties in seeming conflict with the old—against any desire for this or that pleasure, or any aversion from this or that pain—they are unconditionally binding (pp. 226–227).

## HISTORY OF THE JUST MAN'S CONSCIENCE

In the light of these considerations we may trace a history, if we like to call it so, of the just man's conscience—of the conscience which dictates to him an equal regard to the well-being, estimated on the same principles as his own, of all whom his actions may affect. It is a history, however, which does not carry us back to anything beyond reason. It is a history of which reason is the beginning and the end. It is reason which renders the individual capable of self-imposed obedience to the law of his family and of his state, while it is to reason that this law itself owes its existence. It is thus both teacher and learner of the lesson through which a conscience of any kind, with the habit of conformity to conscience, is first acquired, and the individual becomes capable of a reverence which can control inclinations to pleasure. Reason is equally the medium of that extension of one system of law over many communities, of like systems over a still wider range, which, in prophetic souls reflecting on it, first elicits the latent idea of a fellowship of all, and furnishes them with a mode of expression through which the idea may be brought home to ordinary men. When it is so brought home, the personal habits which are needed to give practical effect to it, and which on their part only needed the leaven of this idea to expand into a wider beneficence, are already there. But they are there through the action of the same reason, as already yielding social order and obedience within narrower forms of community (pp. 252–253).

## AN ALTERNATIVE TO PLEASURE

What is the well-being which in a calm hour we desire but a succession of pleasure? We reply as follows. The ground of this desire is a demand for an abiding satisfaction of an abiding self. In a succession of pleasures there can be no such

satisfaction, nor in the longest prolongation of the succession any nearer approach to it than in the first pleasure thereof. If a man, therefore, under the influence of the spiritual demand described, were to seek any succession of pleasures as that which would satisfy the demand, he would be under a delusion (p. 274).

We have dwelt thus at length on the difference between the interest in a true good or permanent well-being in all its forms, and the desire to experience any succession of pleasures, even such a succession as an imaginary enumerator might find to make up the largest possible sum, in order to avoid misapprehension in consideration of the process by which the idea of a true good defines itself and, in defining itself, gives rise to the conception of particular duties. This process, we saw, was really inseparable from that of which the main features have already been considered; the extension, namely, of the range of persons between whom the good is conceived to be common, and who on this ground recognise equivalent duties to each other. Following out that extension as if it were a separate process, we found that its outcome was the intuition of the educated conscience that the true good for all men, so that no one should seek to gain by another's loss, gain and loss being estimated on the same principle for each. But it had not so far appeared how the conscience is trained in the apprehension of what in particular the good is, and in the consequent imposition on itself of particular duties. This defect was to be made up by considering the gradual determination of the idea of good, which goes along with the growth of the conviction that it is good for all men alike (pp. 281-282).

In fact we are very far, in our ordinary estimates of good, whether for ourselves or for others, from keeping such a standard before us, and just for that reason the conviction of the community of good for all men, while retaining its

ence over our practical judgments. It is a source of counsels of perfection which we do not "see our way" to carrying out. It makes itself felt in certain prohibitions, e.g. of slavery, but it has no such effect on the ordering of life as to secure for those whom we admit that it is wrong to use as chattels much real opportunity of self-development. They are left to sink or swim in the stream of unrelenting competition, in which we admit that the weaker has not a chance. So far as negative rights go—rights to be let alone—they are admitted to membership of civil society, but the good things to which the pursuits of society are in fact directed turn out to be no good things for them. Civil society may be, and is, founded on the idea of there being a common good, but that idea in relation to the less favoured members of society is in effect unrealised, and it is unrealised because the good is being sought in objects which admit of being competed for. They are of such a kind that they cannot be equally attained by all. The success of some in obtaining them is incompatible with the success of others. Until the object generally sought as good comes to be a state of mind or character of which the attainment, or approach to attainment, by each is itself a contribution to its attainment by every one else, social life must continue to be one of war—a war, indeed, in which the neutral ground is constantly being extended and which is itself constantly yielding new tendencies to peace, but in which at the same time new vistas of hostile interests, with new prospects of failure for the weaker, are as constantly opening (pp. 288–289).

It will be well here to recall the main points to which our enquiry in its later stages has been directed. Our theory has been that the development of morality is founded on the action in man of an idea of true or absolute good, consisting in the full realisation of the capabilities of the human soul. This idea, however, according to our view, acts in man, to begin with, only as a demand unconscious of the full na-



ture of its object. The demand is indeed from the outset quite different from a desire for pleasure. It is at its lowest a demand for some well-being which shall be common to the individual desiring it with others; and only as such does it yield those institutions of the family, the tribe, and the state, which further determine the morality of the individual. The formation of more adequate conceptions of the end to which the demand is directed we have traced to two influences, separable for purposes of abstract thought but not in fact: one, the natural development, under favouring conditions, of the institutions, just mentioned, to which the demand gives rise; the other, reflection alike upon these institutions and upon those well-reputed habits of action which have been formed in their maintenance and as their effect. Under these influences there has arisen, through a process of which we have endeavoured to trace the outline, on the one hand an everwidening conception of the range of persons between whom the common good is common, on the other a conception of the nature of the common good itself, consistent with its being the object of a universal society co-extensive with mankind. The good has come to be conceived with increasing clearness, not as anything which one man or set of men can gain or enjoy to the exclusion of others, but as a spiritual activity in which all may partake, and in which all must partake, if it is to amount to a full realisation of the faculties of the human soul. And the progress of thought in individuals, by which the conception of the good has been thus freed from material limitations, has gone along with a progress in social unification which has made it possible for men practically to conceive a claim of all upon all for freedom and support in the pursuit of a common end. Thus the ideal of virtue which our consciences acknowledge has come to be the devotion of character and life, in whatever channel the idiosyncrasy and circumstances of the individual may determine, to a perfecting of man, which is itself conceived not

as an external end to be attained by goodness, but as consisting in such a life of self-devoted activity on the part of all persons. From the difficulty of presenting to ourselves in any positive form what a society, perfected in this sense, would be, we may take refuge in describing the object of the devotion, which our consciences demand, as the greatest happiness of the greatest number; and until we puzzle ourselves with analysis, such an account may be sufficient for practical purposes. But our theory becomes false to the real demand of conscience, if it interprets this happiness except as including and dependent upon the unimpeded exercise by the greatest number of a will, the same principle with that which conscience calls upon the individual to aim at in himself (pp. 339-340).

#### UTILITARIANISM EVALUATED

On the whole there is no doubt that the theory of an ideal good, consisting in the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as the end by reference to which the claim of all laws and powers and rules of action on our obedience is to be tested, has tended to improve human conduct and character. This admission may be made quite as readily by those who consider such conduct and character an end in itself, as by those who hold that its improvement can only be measured by reference to an extraneous end, consisting in the quantity of pleasure produced by it; perhaps, when due account has been taken of the difficulty of deciding whether quantity of pleasure is really increased by "social progress," *more* readily by the former than by the latter. It is not indeed to be supposed that the Utilitarian theory, any more than any other theory of morals, has brought about the recognition or practice of any virtues that were not recognised and practised independently of it; or that any one, for being a theoretic Utilitarian, has been a better man—i. e.

one more habitually governed by desire for human perfection in some of its forms—than he otherwise would have been. But it has helped men, acting under the influence of ideals of conduct and rules of virtuous living, to fill up those ideals and apply those rules in a manner beneficial to a wider range of persons—beneficial to them in the sense of tending to remove certain obstacles to good living in their favour. It has not given men a more lively sense of their duty to others—no theory can do that—but it has led those in whom that sense has already been awakened to be less partial in judging who the “others” are, to consider all men as the “others,” and, on the ground of the claim of all men to an equal chance of “happiness,” to secure their political and promote their social equality. To do this is not indeed directly to advance the highest living among men, but it is to remove obstacles to such living, which in the name of principle and authority have often been maintained (pp. 399–400).

Those who are glad of a topic for denunciation may, if they like, treat the prevalence of such opinions among educated men as encouraging the tendency to vicious self-indulgence in practice. No such unfairness will here be committed. There is no good reason to apprehend that there is relatively more—we may even hope that there is less—of self-indulgence than in previous generations; though, for reasons just indicated, it has a wider scope for itself, talks more of itself and is more talked about, than at times when men were more tied down by the necessities of their position. We are no more justified in treating what we take to be untrue theories of morals as positive promoters of vice, than in treating what we deem truer theories as positive promoters of virtue. Only those in whom the tendencies to vicious self-indulgence have been so far overcome as to allow the aspirations after perfection of life to take effect, are in a state to be affected either for better or for worse by theories

of the good. The worst that can truly be objected against the prevalence of Hedonistic theory, just noticed, is that it may retard and mislead those who are already good, according to the ordinary sense of goodness as equivalent to immunity to vice, in their effort to be better; and the most that can be claimed for the theory which we deem truer, is that it keeps the way clearer of speculative impediments to the operation of motives, which it seeks to interpret but does not pretend to supply (pp. 406-407).

#### SELF-REALISATION AS THE ULTIMATE GOOD

We should accept the view, then, that to think of ultimate good is to think of an intrinsically desirable form of conscious life; but we should seek further to define it. We should take it in the sense that to think of such good is to think of a state of self-conscious life as intrinsically desirable for oneself, and for that reason is to think of it as something else than pleasure—the thought of an object as pleasure for oneself, and the thought of it as intrinsically desirable for oneself, being thoughts which exclude each other. The pleasure anticipated in the life is not that which renders it desirable; but so far as desire is excited by the thought of it as desirable, and so far as that desire is reflected on, pleasure comes to be anticipated in the satisfaction of that desire. The thought of the intrinsically desirable life, then, is the thought of something else than pleasure, but the thought of what? The thought, we answer, of the full realisation of the capacities of the human soul, of the fulfilment of man's vocation, as of that in which alone he can satisfy himself—a thought of which the content is never final and complete, which is always by its creative energy further determining its own conduct, but which for practical purposes, as the mover and guide of our highest moral effort, may be taken to be the thought of such a social life

as that described. The thought of such a life, again, when applied as a criterion for the valuation of the probable effects of action, may be taken to be represented by the question . . . "Does this or that law or usage, this or that course of action—directly or indirectly, positively or as preventive of the opposite—contribute to the better being of society, as measured by the more general establishment of conditions favourable to the attainment of the recognised virtues and excellencies, by the more general attainment of those excellencies in some degree, or by their attainment on the part of some persons in higher degree without detracting from the opportunities of others?" (pp. 457-458.)

The reader, however, will be weary of hearing of this ideal, and will be waiting to know in what particular way it can afford guidance in cases of the kind supposed, where conventional morality and Utilitarian theory alike fail to do so. We have argued that no man could tell whether, by denying himself according to the examples given, he would in the whole result increase the amount of pleasant living in the world, present and to come. Can he tell any better whether he will further that realisation of the ideal just described, in regard to which we admit the impossibility of saying positively what in its completeness it would be?

We answer as follows. The whole question of sacrificing one's own pleasure assumes a different aspect, when the end for which it is to be sacrificed is not an addition to a general aggregate of pleasures, but the harmonious exercise of man's proper activities in some life resting on a self-sacrificing will. According to the latter view, the individual's sacrifice of pleasure does not—as so much loss of pleasure—come into the reckoning at all; nor has any balance to be attempted of unascertainable pains and pleasures spreading over an indefinite range of sentient life. The good to be sought is not made up of pleasures, nor the evil to be avoided made up of pains. The end for which the sacrifice is demanded is one

which in the sacrifice itself is in some measure attained,—in some measure only, not fully, yet so that the sacrifice is related to the complete end, not as a means in itself valueless, but as a constituent to a whole which it helps to form. That realisation of the powers of the human spirit, which we deem the true end, is not to be thought of merely as something in a remote distance, towards which we may take steps now, but in which there is no present participation. It is continuously going on, though in varying and progressive degrees of completeness; and the individual's sacrifice of an inclination, harmless or even in its way laudable, for the sake of a higher good, is itself already in some measure an attainment of the higher good (pp. 461–462).

## CHAPTER XIV

### HENRY SIDGWICK

(1838-1900)

IF Oxford has been in British Life the home of lost causes, Cambridge has been the home of rising hope, for it has remained the citadel of growing science. Science is not so generously expectant as is religion, nor is it so bold of proof as is metaphysics. But it builds from the bottom, and grows from more to more. In the long run it may well be that this slow way is the way ahead, though at every juncture it check religious faith and cool metaphysical ardor.

Ethical thinkers in Christendom have been slow, however, to admit this. Ethics has been closely allied with both religion and metaphysics. Aristotle, it is true, had early contented himself for the most part with finding what men ought to do by discovering what they actually were doing, though even he at the end yearned to make divine activity a pattern for human conduct. Sidgwick was deeply impressed by Aristotle's scientific example in the moral field. He acknowledged Aristotle's influence by openly imitating him. As Aristotle sought to determine what was right by analyzing the conduct of his cultured countrymen, Sidgwick thought to understand morality by tabulating and harmonizing the main methods used by Christendom for finding out what is right. A disciple of John Stuart Mill in the beginning, and through Utilitarianism heir of the whole English empirical movement, Sidgwick profited also by coming after Darwin. Indeed Sidgwick is the first moralist in our selections to have built on Darwin's insight. Green, as we saw,

knew Darwin and Spencer. Indeed, he accepted evolution in word but not in fact; for while human consciousness and even conscience may seem to have evolved, they actually could never have been antedated, according to Green. Sidgwick, on the other hand, openly declares, "I do not doubt that the whole fabric of human thought—including the conceptions that present themselves as most simple and elementary—has been developed, through a gradual process of psychical change, out of some lower life in which thought, properly speaking, had no place" (p. 32). It is true that Sidgwick makes no profound use of this acceptance of evolution. He conceived his problem to be not how moral notions came to be but how effective the various methods were and how they might be harmonized. But his acceptance of evolution does accentuate his scientific open-mindedness and certainly gives to his empirical inheritance a modern setting.

Sidgwick finds all moral methods reducible to three, each one being "a rational procedure by which we determine what individual human beings 'ought'—or what it is 'right' for them—to do" (p. 1). These methods themselves are adequately defined and explained in the following selections; but since it is impossible through brief passages to give a sense of the richness of detail whereby Sidgwick reaches his conclusions, it is well further to orient Sidgwick's system.

There are only two main ends which it is reasonable for human beings to seek—happiness and perfection of character—and happiness is the best formulation of ultimate human good. So far Sidgwick agrees with Mill throughout. The basic moral problem is, then, how to achieve happiness. It is entirely reasonable for a man to seek his own greatest happiness. It is entirely reasonable to seek the greatest general happiness. How are these facts made out? By the discovery of self-evident intuitions prescribing both. And both are in



need of prescription, though the first may not at once seem so. Men do seek their own happiness, as Mill saw; but they do not always seek their own *greatest* happiness. The intuition of Prudence enjoins men to seek their own *greatest* good, resisting the lure of the immediate as against the equal claim of the remote: "Hereafter *as such* is to be regarded neither less nor more than Now." Barnyard egoism may be thought a natural and easy path, but rational egoism appears a difficult and dutiful way of life, made reasonable to the human animal only by an intuition. General happiness is likewise prescribed by the intuition of Benevolence: "each one is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as his own." Utilitarianism is made to find in intuition the foundation it needs, and intuitionism in utility the justification it needs.

Thus it is made out that men ought to direct their lives with reference both to self-good and to other-good. But how are these two "oughts" to be harmonized? That they need to be harmonized is clear when one realizes that they make equally a duty of what to the Christian conscience are as different and conflicting as selfishness and unselfishness. They can be harmonized intellectually by showing that both alike arise from a common intuition—"the maxim of Justice or Equity": "similar cases ought to be treated similarly" (pp. 386-387). This axiom is as self-evident to Sidgwick as "the mathematical axiom that 'if equals be added to equals the wholes are equal' " (p. 383). From this mother maxim of similar treatment to similars it is clear how we get the daughter maxim of benevolence, similar treatment to different persons when they are similar, and the son maxim of egoism, similar consideration of different pleasures when they are similar in intensity and certainty.

The foregoing harmony of conflicting standards by deduction of them from a common source makes clear that

Sidgwick had learned from other than empiricists. Mathematics furnishes him a model for morality. Kant had been his master as well as Mill, though Mill's influence lasted longest. He had by rationalistic standards shown morality to be completely reasonable by proving that the three methods are reducible to two, that these two rest upon self-evident axioms, and that these axioms are reducible to a third mathematical-like intuition. But he was not satisfied. He wished Egoism and Altruism to be brother and sister in fact as well as in theory. Though they had been self-evidently harmonized, he was scientist enough to see and honest enough to admit that they did not live together in peace. To make morality completely reasonable to his empirical mind, it was necessary to show that service to others would at last in every case redound to one's own greatest happiness. Such is not the case here and now. Sidgwick saw no way of guaranteeing that the good man would thereby get the goods save upon the theological assumption of an after-life. Though he was sympathetic with the religious tradition and though he gave many years of his life to the study of psychical research and to the investigation of promising mediums—being the first president of the Society for Psychical Research—he was not able with a full mind and a clear conscience to harmonize egoism and altruism practically through faith in a future life merely because his hope demanded it and his argument needed it.

His work stands out as a monument of patience and honesty and open-mindedness. It is not an original system of ethics, but many systems rolled into one. It is a liberal education to follow his arguments in full. It will not be without intellectual reward to follow them here in outline. It has seemed best in this case, as in that of Green preceding and of Moore following, to give the structure of the argument as a whole rather than a mere completed segment of it.

THE METHODS OF ETHICS<sup>1</sup>

## THE AIM STATED

I have attempted to define and unfold not one Method of Ethics, but several: at the same time these are not here studied historically, as methods that have actually been used or proposed for the regulation of practice; but rather as alternatives between which—so far as they cannot be reconciled—the human mind seems to me necessarily forced to choose, when it attempts to frame a complete synthesis of practical maxims and to act in a perfectly consistent manner. Thus, they might perhaps be called natural methods rationalised; because men commonly seem to guide themselves by a mixture of different methods, more or less disguised under ambiguities of language (p. 12).

My object, then, in the present work, is to expound as clearly and as fully as my limits will allow the different methods of Ethics that I find implicit in our common moral reasoning; to point out their mutual relations; and where they seem to conflict, to define the issue as much as possible. . . . I have wished to keep the reader's attention throughout directed to the processes rather than the results of ethical thought: and have therefore never stated as my own any positive practical conclusions unless by way of illustration: and have never ventured to decide dogmatically any controverted points, except where the controversy seemed to arise from want of precision or clearness in the definition of principles, or want of consistency in reasoning (p. 14).

## THE PRINCIPLE AND METHOD OF EGOISM

The Object of the present Book is to examine the method of determining reasonable conduct . . . defined in outline

<sup>1</sup> These selections are from the Seventh Edition, reprint of 1922. Macmillan and Co., London. The footnotes are omitted and subheads added.

under the name of Egoism: taking this term as equivalent to Egoistic Hedonism, and as implying the adoption of his own greatest happiness as the ultimate end of each individual's action. It may be doubted whether this ought to be included among received "methods of *Ethics*"; since there are strong grounds for holding that a system of morality, satisfactory to the moral consciousness of mankind in general, cannot be constructed on the basis of simple Egoism. . . . At present it seems sufficient to point to the wide acceptance of the principle that it is reasonable for a man to act in the manner most conducive to his own happiness. We find it expressly admitted by leading representatives both of Intuitionism and of that Universalistic Hedonism to which I propose to restrict the name of Utilitarianism. Bentham, although he puts forward the greatest happiness of the greatest number as the "true standard of right and wrong," yet regards it as "right and proper" that each individual should aim at his own greatest happiness. And Butler is equally prepared to grant "that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us . . . that, though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good as such; yet, when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it."

And even Clarke—notwithstanding the emphatic terms in which he has maintained that "Virtue truly deserves to be chosen for its own sake and Vice to be avoided"—yet admits that it is "not truly reasonable that men by adhering to Virtue should part with their lives, if thereby they eternally deprived themselves of all possibility of receiving any advantage from that adherence."

And, generally, in the ages of Christian faith, it has been obvious and natural to hold that the realisation of virtue is essentially an enlightened and far-seeing pursuit of Happi-

ness for the agent. Nor has this doctrine been held only by persons of a cold and calculating turn of mind: we find it urged with emphasis by so chivalrous and high-minded a preacher as Bishop Berkeley. No doubt this is only one side or element of the Christian view: the opposite doctrine, that an action done from motives of self-interest is not properly virtuous, has continually asserted itself as either openly conflicting or in some manner reconciled with the former. Still the former, though less refined and elevated, seems to have been the commoner view. Indeed, it is hardly going too far to say that common sense assumes that "interested" actions, tending to promote the agent's happiness, are *prima facie* reasonable: and that the *onus probandi* lies with those who maintain that disinterested conduct as such, is reasonable.

But . . . in the common notions of "interest," "happiness," etc., there is a certain amount of vagueness and ambiguity: so that in order to fit these terms for the purposes of scientific discussion, we must, while retaining the main part of their signification, endeavour to make it more precise. In my judgment this result is attained if by "greatest possible Happiness" we understand the greatest attainable surplus of pleasure over pain; the two terms being used, with equally comprehensive meanings, to include respectively all kinds of agreeable and disagreeable feelings. Further, if this quantitative definition of the end be accepted, consistency requires that pleasures should be sought in proportion to their pleasantness; and therefore the less pleasant consciousness must not be preferred to the more pleasant, on the ground of any other qualities that it may possess. The distinctions of *quality* that Mill and others urge may still be admitted as grounds of preference, but only in so far as they can be resolved into distinctions of quantity. This is the type to which the practical reasoning that is commonly called "Egoistic" tends to conform, when we rigorously exclude all ambiguities and inconsistencies: and it is only in this more

precise form that it seems worth while to subject such reasoning to a detailed examination. We must therefore understand by an Egoist a man who when two or more courses of action are open to him, ascertains as accurately as he can the amounts of pleasure and pain that are likely to result from each, and chooses the one which he thinks will yield him the greatest surplus of pleasure over pain.

#### SEVERAL METHODS OF GETTING AT EGOISTIC RESULTS

It must, however, be pointed out that the adoption of the fundamental *principle* of Egoism, as just explained, by no means necessarily implies the ordinary empirical method of seeking one's own pleasure or happiness. A man may aim at the greatest happiness within his reach, and yet not attempt to ascertain empirically what amount of pleasure and pain is likely to attend any given course of action; believing that he has some surer, deductive method for determining the conduct which will make him most happy in the long-run. He may believe this on grounds of Positive Religion, because God has promised happiness as a reward for obedience to certain definite commands: or on grounds of Natural Religion, because God being just and benevolent must have so ordered the world that Happiness will in the long-run be distributed in proportion to Virtue. It is (*e. g.*) by a combination of both these arguments that Paley connects the Universalistic Hedonism that he adopts as a method for determining duties, with the Egoism which seems to him self-evident as a fundamental principle of rational conduct. Or again, a man may connect virtue with happiness by a process of *a priori* reasoning, purely ethical; as Aristotle seems to do by the assumption that the "best" activity will be always attended by the greatest pleasure as its inseparable concomitant; "best" being determined by a reference to moral intuition, or to the common moral opinions of men

generally, or of well-bred and well-educated men. Or the deduction by which Maximum Pleasure is inferred to be the result of a particular kind of action may be psychological or physiological: we may have some general theory as to the connexion of pleasure with some other physical or psychical fact, according to which we can deduce the amount of pleasure that will attend any particular kind of behaviour: as (*e. g.*) it is widely held that a perfectly healthy and harmonious exercise of our different bodily and mental functions is the course of life most conducive to pleasure in the long-run. In this latter case, though accepting unreservedly the Hedonistic principle, we shall not be called upon to estimate and compare particular pleasures, but rather to define the notions of "perfect health" and "harmony of functions" and consider how these ends may be attained. Still those who advocate such deductive methods commonly appeal to ordinary experience, at least as supplying confirmation or verification; and admit that the pleasantness and painfulness of pleasures and pains are only directly known to the individual who experiences them. It would seem, therefore, that—at any rate—the obvious method of Egoistic Hedonism is that which we may call Empirical-reflective: and it is this I conceive that is commonly used in egoistic deliberation (pp. 119–122).

#### THE EMPIRICAL-REFLECTIVE METHOD OF PROMOTING PLEASURE DEFINED

The empirical-reflective method of Egoistic Hedonism will be, to represent beforehand the different series of feelings that our knowledge of physical and psychical causes leads us to expect from the different lines of conduct that lie open to us; judge which series, as thus represented, appears on the whole preferable, taking all probabilities into account; and adopt the corresponding line of conduct (p. 131).

## THE EMPIRICAL-REFLECTIVE METHOD EVALUATED

These considerations make clearer the extent of the assumptions of Empirical Quantitative Hedonism: viz. (1) that our pleasures and pains have each a definite degree, and (2) that this degree is empirically cognizable. Firstly, if pleasure only exists as it is felt, the belief that every pleasure and pain has a definite intensive quantity or degree must remain an *a priori* assumption, incapable of positive empirical verification. . . . But secondly, granting that each of our pleasures and pains has really a definite degree of pleasantness or painfulness, the question still remains whether we have any means of accurately measuring these degrees. . . . It must, I think, be admitted that the exact cognition of the place of each kind of feeling in a scale of desirability, measured positively and negatively from a zero of perfect indifference, is at best an ideal to which we can never tell how closely we approximate. . . . We must conclude then that our estimate of the hedonistic value of any past pleasure or pain, is liable to an amount of error which we cannot calculate exactly; because the represented pleasantness of different feelings fluctuates and varies indefinitely with changes in the actual condition of the representing mind (p. 146-147).

The foregoing considerations must, I think, seriously reduce our confidence in what I have called the Empirical-reflective method of Egoistic Hedonism. I do not conclude that we should reject it altogether: I am conscious that, in spite of all the difficulties that I have urged, I continue to make comparisons between pleasures and pains with practical reliance on their results. But I conclude that it would be at least highly desirable, with a view to the systematic direction of conduct, to control and supplement the results of such comparisons by the assistance of some other



method: if we can find any on which we see reason to rely (p. 150).

#### COMMON SENSE AS A METHOD OF PROMOTING PLEASURE

Before we examine those methods of seeking one's own happiness which are more remote from the empirical, it will be well to consider how far we may reasonably avoid the difficulties and uncertainties of the method of reflective comparison, by relying on the current opinions and accepted estimates of the value of different objects commonly sought as sources of pleasure (p. 151).

Thus our examination shows great instability and uncertainty in the most decisive judgments of common sense; since, as I have said, bodily comfort and luxury, wealth, fame, power, society are the objects which common opinion seems most clearly and confidently to recommend as sources of pleasure. For though the pleasures derived from Art and the contemplation of the beautiful in Nature, and those of curiosity and the exercise of the intellect generally, are highly praised, it is difficult to formulate a "common opinion" in respect of them, since the high estimates often set upon them seem to express the real experience of only small minorities. And though these have persuaded the mass of mankind, or that portion of it which is possessed of leisure, to let Culture be regarded as an important source of happiness; they can scarcely be said to have produced any generally accepted opinion as to its importance in comparison with the other sources before mentioned, the pleasures of which are more genuinely appreciated by the majority; still less as to the relative value of different elements of this culture (p. 157).

On the whole, it must, I think, be admitted that the Hedonistic method cannot be freed from inexactness and uncer-

tainty by appealing to the judgments of common sense respecting the sources of happiness. At the same time I would not exaggerate the difficulty of combining these into a tolerably coherent body of probable doctrine, not useless for practical guidance (p. 158).

#### DOING ONE'S DUTY AS THE WAY TO PLEASURE

The belief in the connexion of Happiness with Duty is one to which we find a general tendency among civilised men, at least after a certain stage in civilisation has been reached. But it is doubtful whether it would be affirmed, among ourselves, as a generalisation from experience, and not rather as a matter of direct Divine Revelation, or an inevitable inference from the belief that the world is governed by a perfectly Good and Omnipotent Being. . . . Here I shall only consider the coincidence of Duty and Happiness in so far as it is maintained by arguments drawn from experience and supposed to be realised in our present earthly life (p. 162).

Although the performance of duties towards others and the exercise of social virtue seem to be *generally* the best means to the attainment of the individual's happiness, and it is easy to exhibit this coincidence between Virtue and Happiness rhetorically and popularly; still, when we carefully analyse and estimate the consequences of Virtue to the virtuous agent, it appears improbable that this coincidence is complete and universal. We may conceive the coincidence becoming perfect in a Utopia where men were as much in accord on moral as they are now on mathematical questions, where Law was in perfect harmony with Moral Opinion, and all offences were discovered and duly punished: or we may conceive the same result attained by intensifying the moral sentiments of all members of the community, without any external changes (which indeed would then be unneces-

sary). But just in proportion as existing societies and existing men fall short of this ideal, rules of conduct based on the principles of Egoistic Hedonism seem liable to diverge from those which most men are accustomed to recognise as prescribed by Duty and Virtue (p. 175).

DEDUCTION FROM SOMETHING ELSE AS A WAY  
TO PLEASURE

It may, however, be thought that a knowledge of the causes of pleasure and pain may carry us beyond the determination of the means of gaining particular kinds of pleasure and avoiding particular kinds of pain; and enable us to substitute some deductive method of evaluating the elements of happiness for the empirical-reflective method of which we have seen the defects.

A hedonistic method, indeed, that would dispense altogether with direct estimates of the pleasurable and painful consequences of actions is almost as inconceivable as a method of astronomy that would dispense with observations of the stars. It is, however, conceivable that by induction from cases in which empirical measurement is easy we may obtain generalisations that will give us more trustworthy guidance than such measurement can do in complicated cases; we may be able to ascertain some general psychical or physical concomitant or antecedent of pleasure and pain, more easy to recognise, foresee, measure, and produce or avert in such cases, than pleasure and pain themselves. I am willing to hope that this refuge from the difficulties of Empirical Hedonism may some time or other be open to us: but I cannot perceive that it is at present available. There is at present, so far as I can judge, no satisfactorily established general theory of the causes of pleasure and pain; and such theories as have gained a certain degree of acceptance, as partially true or probable, are manifestly not adapted for

the practical application that we here require (pp. 177-178).

#### THE EMPIRICAL METHOD ALONE SURVIVES CRITICISM

We seem, then, forced to conclude that there is no scientific short-cut to the ascertainment of the right means to the individual's happiness: every attempt to find a "high priori road" to this goal brings us back inevitably to the empirical method. For instead of a clear principle universally valid, we only get at best a vague and general rule, based on considerations which it is important not to overlook, but the relative value of which we can only estimate by careful observation and comparison of individual experience. Whatever uncertainty besets these processes must necessarily extend to all our reasoning about happiness. I have no wish to exaggerate these uncertainties, feeling that we must all continue to seek happiness for ourselves and for others, in whatever obscurity we may have to grope after it: but there is nothing gained by underrating them, and it is idle to argue as if they did not exist (p. 195).

#### THE METHOD OF INTUITIONISM

A dubious guidance to an ignoble end appears to be all that the calculus of Egoistic Hedonism has to offer. And it is by appealing to the superior certainty with which the dictates of Conscience or the Moral Faculty are issued, that Butler maintains the practical supremacy of Conscience over Self-love, in spite of his admission of theoretical priority in the claims of the latter. A man knows certainly, he says, what he ought to do: but he does not certainly know what will lead to his happiness.

In saying this, Butler appears to me fairly to represent the common moral sense of ordinary mankind, in our own

age no less than in his. The moral judgments that men habitually pass on one another in ordinary discourse imply for the most part that duty is usually not a difficult thing for an ordinary man to *know*, though various seductive impulses may make it difficult for him to *do* it. And in such maxims as that duty should be performed "*advienne que pourra*," that truth should be spoken without regard to consequences, that justice should be done "*though the sky should fall*," it is implied that we have the power of seeing clearly that certain kinds of actions are right and reasonable in themselves, apart from their consequences;—or rather with a merely practical consideration of consequences, from which other consequences admitted to be possibly good or bad are definitely excluded. And such a power is claimed for the human mind by most of the writers who have maintained the existence of moral intuitions; I have therefore thought myself justified in treating this claim as characteristic of the method which I distinguish as Intuitionist (p. 200).

I have used the term "Intuitionist" to denote the view of ethics which regards as the practically ultimate end of moral actions their conformity to certain rules or dictates of Duty unconditionally prescribed (p. 96). We must understand that the disregard of consequences which the Intuitionist view is here taken to imply, only relates to certain determinate classes of action (such as Truth-speaking) where common usage of terms adequately defines what events are to be included in the general notions of the acts, and what regarded as their consequences (p. 97).

The three phases of Intuitionism may be treated as three stages in the formal development of Intuitive Morality: we may term them respectively Perceptual, Dogmatic, and Philosophical. . . . It must not be thought that these three phases are sharply distinguished in the moral reasoning of ordinary men: but then no more is Intuitionism of any sort sharply distinguished from either species of Hedonism. A

loose combination or confusion of methods is the most common type of actual moral reasoning. Probably most moral men believe that their moral sense or instinct in any case will guide them fairly right [Perceptual], but also that there are general rules for determining right action in different departments of conduct [Dogmatic]: and that for these again it is possible to find a philosophical explanation, by which they may be deduced from a smaller number of fundamental principles [Philosophical] (pp. 102-103).

#### BUT DO INTUITIONS EXIST

But the question may be raised, whether it is legitimate to take for granted (as I have hitherto been doing) the existence of such intuitions? And, no doubt, there are persons who deliberately deny that reflection enables them to discover any such phenomenon in their conscious experience as the judgment or apparent perception that an act is in itself right or good, in any other sense than that of being the right or fit means to the attainment of some ulterior end. I think, however, that such denials are commonly recognised as paradoxical, and opposed to the common experience of civilised men—at any rate if the psychological question, as to the *existence* of such moral judgments or apparent perceptions of moral qualities, is carefully distinguished from the ethical question as to their *validity*, and from what we may call the psychogonical question as to their *origin*. The first and second of these questions are sometimes confounded, owing to an ambiguity in the use of the term “intuition”; which has sometimes been understood to imply that the judgment or apparent perception so designated is *true*. I wish therefore to say expressly, that by calling any affirmation as to the rightness or wrongness of actions “intuitive,” I do not mean to prejudge the question as to its ultimate validity, when philosophically considered: I only

mean that its truth is apparently known immediately, and not as the result of reasoning. I admit the possibility that any such "intuition" may turn out to have an element of error, which subsequent reflection and comparison may enable us to correct: just as many apparent perceptions through the organ of vision are found to be partially illusory and misleading: indeed the sequel will show that I hold this to be to an important extent the case with moral intuitions commonly so called.

The question as to the validity of moral intuitions being thus separated from the simple question "whether they actually exist," it becomes obvious that the latter can only be decided for each person by direct introspection or reflection. It must not therefore be supposed that its decision is a simple matter, introspection being always infallible: on the contrary, experience leads me to regard men as often liable to confound with moral intuitions other states or acts of mind essentially different from them,—blind impulses to certain kinds of action or vague sentiments of preference for them, or conclusions from rapid and half-unconscious processes of reasoning, or current opinions to which familiarity has given an illusory air of self-evidence. . . . Still the question whether a certain judgment presents itself to the reflective mind as intuitively known cannot be decided by any inquiry into its antecedents or causes (pp. 211–12).

Those who dispute the validity of moral or other intuitions on the ground of their derivation must be required to show, not merely that they are the effects of certain causes, but that these causes are of a kind that tend to produce invalid beliefs. Now it is not, I conceive, possible to prove by any theory of the derivation of the moral faculty that the fundamental ethical conceptions "right" or "what ought to be done," "good" or "what it is reasonable to desire and see," are invalid, and that consequently *all* propositions of the form "X is right" or "good" are untrustworthy: for

such ethical propositions, relating as they do to matter fundamentally different from that with which physical science or psychology deals, cannot be inconsistent with any physical or psychological conclusions. They can only be shown to involve error by being shown to contradict each other: and such a demonstration cannot lead us cogently to the sweeping conclusion that all are false (p. 213).

We started with admitting the point upon the proof of which moralists have often concentrated their efforts, the existence of apparently independent moral intuitions. It seemed undeniable that men judge some acts to be right and wrong in themselves, without consideration of their tendency to produce happiness to the agent or to others: and indeed without taking their consequences into account at all, except in so far as these are included in the common notion of the act. We saw, however, that in so far as these judgments are passed in particular cases, they seem to involve (at least for the more reflective part of mankind) a reference of the case to some general rule of duty: and that in the frequent cases of doubt or conflict of judgments as to the rightness of any action, appeal is commonly made to such rules or maxims, as the ultimately valid principles of moral cognition. In order, therefore, to throw the Morality of Common Sense into a scientific form, it seemed necessary to obtain as exact a statement as possible of these generally recognised principles. . . .

#### RULES FOR SIGNIFICANT SELF-EVIDENCE

There seem to be four conditions, the complete fulfilment of which would establish a significant proposition, apparently self-evident, in the highest degree of certainty attainable: and which must be approximately realised by the premises of our reasoning in any inquiry, if that reasoning is to lead us cogently to trustworthy conclusions.



I. The terms of the proposition must be clear and precise.  
II. The self-evidence of the proposition must be ascertained by careful reflection.

III. The propositions accepted as self-evident must be mutually consistent.

IV. Since it is implied in the very notion of Truth that it is essentially the same for all minds, the denial by another of a proposition that I have affirmed has a tendency to impair my confidence in its validity (pp. 337–338).

Now if the account given of the Morality of Common Sense be in the main correct, it seems clear that, generally speaking, its maxims do not fulfil the conditions just laid down. So long as they are left in the state of somewhat vague generalities, as we meet them in ordinary discourse, we are disposed to yield them unquestioning assent, and it may be fairly claimed that the assent is approximately universal—in the sense that any expression of dissent is eccentric and paradoxical. But as soon as we attempt to give them the definiteness which science requires, we find that we cannot do this without abandoning the universality of acceptance (p. 342).

#### FROM COMMON SENSE TO PHILOSOPHICAL INTUITIONISM

Is there, then, no possibility of attaining, by a more profound and discriminating examination of our common moral thought, to real ethical axioms—intuitive propositions of real clearness and certainty?

This leads us to the examination of that third phase of the intuitive method, which was called Philosophical Intuitionism. For we conceive it as the aim of a philosopher, as such, to do somewhat more than define and formulate the common moral opinions of mankind. His function is to tell men what they ought to think, rather than what they do think:

he is expected to transcend Common Sense in his premises, and is allowed a certain divergence from Common Sense in his conclusions. It is true that the limits of this deviation are firmly, though indefinitely, fixed: the truth of a philosopher's premises will always be tested by the acceptability of his conclusions: if in any important point he be found in flagrant conflict with common opinion, his method is likely to be declared invalid (p. 373).

### THE THREE MORAL AXIOMS

Can we then, between this Scylla and Charybdis of ethical inquiry, avoiding on the one hand doctrines that merely bring us back to common opinion with all its imperfections, and on the other hand doctrines that lead us round in a circle, find any way of obtaining self-evident moral principles of real significance? It would be disheartening to have to regard as altogether illusory the strong instinct of Common Sense that points to the existence of such principles, and the deliberate convictions of the long line of moralists who have enunciated them. At the same time, the more we extend our knowledge of man and his environment, the more we realise the vast variety of human natures and circumstances that have existed in different ages and countries, the less disposed we are to believe that there is any definite code of absolute rules, applicable to all human beings without exception. And we shall find, I think, that the truth lies between these two conclusions. There are certain absolute practical principles, the truth of which, when they are explicitly stated, is manifest; but they are of too abstract a nature, and too universal in their scope, to enable us to ascertain by immediate application of them what we ought to do in any particular case; particular duties have still to be determined by some other method.

## THE MAXIM OF JUSTICE

One such principle [is] that whatever action any of us judges to be right for himself, he implicitly judges to be right for all similar persons in similar circumstances. Or, as we may otherwise put it, "if a kind of conduct that is right (or wrong) for me is not right (or wrong) for some one else, it must be on the ground of some difference between the two cases, other than the fact that I and he are different persons." A corresponding proposition may be stated with equal truth in respect of what ought to be done *to*—not *by*—different individuals. These principles have been most widely recognised, not in their most abstract and universal form, but in their special application to the situation of two (or more) individuals similarly related to each other: as so applied, they appear in what is popularly known as the Golden Rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." This formula is obviously unprecise in statement; for one might wish for another's co-operation in sin, and be willing to reciprocate it. Nor is it even true to say that we ought to do to others only what we think it right for them to do to us; for no one will deny that there may be differences in the circumstances—and even in the natures—of two individuals A and B, which would make it wrong for A to treat B in the way in which it is right for B to treat A. In short the self-evident principle strictly stated must take some such negative form as this; "it cannot be right for A to treat B in a manner in which it would be wrong for B to treat A, merely on the ground that they are two different individuals, and without there being any difference between the natures or circumstances of the two which can be stated as a reasonable ground for difference of treatment." Such a principle manifestly does not give complete guidance—indeed its effect, strictly speaking, is merely

to throw a definite *onus probandi* on the man who applies to another a treatment of which he would complain if applied to himself: but Common Sense has amply recognised the practical importance of the maxim: and its truth, so far as it goes, appears to me self-evident. .

#### THE MAXIM OF PRUDENCE

The principle just discussed, which seems to be more or less clearly implied in the common notion of "fairness" or "equity," is obtained by considering the similarity of the individuals that make up a Logical Whole or Genus. There are others, no less important, which emerge in the consideration of the similar parts of a Mathematical or Quantitative Whole. Such a Whole is presented in the common notion of the Good—or, as is sometimes said, "good on the whole"—of any individual human being. The proposition "that one ought to aim at one's own good" is sometimes given as the maxim of Rational Self-Love or Prudence: but as so stated it does not clearly avoid tautology; since we may define "good" as "what one ought to aim at." If, however, we say "one's good on the whole," the addition suggests a principle which, when explicitly stated, is, at any rate, not tautological. . . . We might express it concisely by saying "that Hereafter *as such* is to be regarded neither less nor more than Now." It is not, of course, meant that the good of the present may not reasonably be preferred to that of the future on account of its greater certainty: or again, that a week ten years hence may not be more important to us than a week now, through an increase in our means or capacities of happiness. All that the principle affirms is that the mere difference of priority and posteriority in time is not a reasonable ground for having more regard to the consciousness of one moment than to that of another. The form in which it practically presents itself to

most men is "that a smaller present good is not to be preferred to a greater future good" (allowing for difference of certainty): since Prudence is generally exercised in restraining a present desire (the object or satisfaction of which we commonly regard as *pro tanto* "a good"), on account of the remoter consequences of gratifying it. The commonest view of the principle would no doubt be that the present *pleasure* or *happiness* is reasonably to be foregone with the view of obtaining greater pleasure or happiness hereafter: but the principle need not be restricted to a hedonistic application; it is equally applicable to any other interpretation of "one's own good," in which good is conceived as a mathematical whole, of which the integrant parts are realised in different parts or moments of a lifetime. And therefore it is perhaps better to distinguish it here from the principle "that Pleasure is the sole Ultimate Good," which does not seem to have any logical connexion with it.

So far we have only been considering the "Good on the Whole" of a single individual: but just as this notion is constructed by comparison and integration of the different "goods" that succeed one another in the series of our conscious states, so we have formed the notion of Universal Good by comparison and integrations of the goods of all individual human—or sentient—existences. And here again, just as in the former case, by considering the relation of the integrant parts to the whole and to each other, I obtain the self-evident principle that the good of any one individual is of no more importance, from the point of view (if I may say so) of the Universe, than the good of any other; unless, that is, there are special grounds for believing that more good is likely to be realised in the one case than in the other. And it is evident to me that as a rational being I am bound to aim at good generally,—so far as it is attainable by my efforts,—not merely at a particular part of it.

## THE MAXIM OF BENEVOLENCE

From these two rational intuitions we may deduce, as a necessary inference, the maxim of Benevolence in an abstract form: *viz.* that each one is morally bound to regard the good of any other individual as much as his own, except in so far as he judges it to be less, when impartially viewed, or less certainly knowable or attainable by him. I before observed that the duty of Benevolence as recognised by common sense seems to fall somewhat short of this. But I think it may be fairly urged in explanation of this that *practically* each man, even with a view to universal Good, ought chiefly to concern himself with promoting the good of a limited number of human beings, and that generally in proportion to the closeness of their connexion with him. I think that a "plain man," in a modern civilised society, if his conscience were fairly brought to consider the hypothetical question, whether it would be morally right for him to seek his own happiness on any occasion if it involved a certain sacrifice of the greater happiness of some other human being,—without counter-balancing gain to any one else,—would answer unhesitatingly in the negative.

I have tried to show how in the principles of Justice, Prudence, and Rational Benevolence as commonly recognised there is at least a self-evident element, immediately cognisable by abstract intuition; depending in each case on the relation which individuals and their particular ends bear as parts to their wholes, and to other parts of these wholes. I regard the apprehension, with more or less distinctness, of these abstract truths, as the permanent basis of the common conviction that the fundamental precepts of morality are essentially reasonable. No doubt these principles are often placed side by side with other precepts to which custom and general consent have given a merely illusory air of self-evidence: but the distinction between the

two kinds of maxims appears to me to become manifest by merely reflecting upon them. I know by direct reflection that the propositions, "I ought to speak the truth," "I ought to keep my promises"—however true they may be—are not self-evident to me; they present themselves as propositions requiring rational justification of some kind. On the other hand, the propositions, "I ought not to prefer a present lesser good to a future greater good," and "I ought not to prefer my own lesser good to a greater good of another," do present themselves as self-evident; as much (*e. g.*) as the mathematical axiom that "if equals be added to equals the wholes are equal" (pp. 379–383).

#### INTUITIONISM AS BASIS FOR UTILITARIANISM

I must now point out—if it has not long been apparent to the reader—that the self-evident principles laid down do not specially belong to Intuitionism in the restricted sense which, for clear distinction of methods, I gave to this term at the outset of our investigation. The axiom of Prudence, as I have given it, is a self-evident principle, implied in Rational Egoism as commonly accepted. Again, the axiom of Justice or Equity as above stated—"that similar cases ought to be treated similarly"—belongs in all its applications to Utilitarianism as much as to any system commonly called Intuitional: while the axiom of Rational Benevolence is, in my view, required as a rational basis for the Utilitarian system.

Accordingly, I find that I arrive, in my search for really clear and certain ethical intuitions, at the fundamental principle of Utilitarianism. . . . Utilitarianism is thus presented as the final form into which Intuitionism tends to pass, when the demand for really self-evident first principles is rigorously pressed. In order, however, to make this transition logically complete, we require to interpret "Universal Good" as "Universal Happiness" (pp. 386–388).

## THE MEANING OF UTILITARIANISM

By Utilitarianism is here meant the ethical theory, that the conduct which, under any given circumstances, is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole; that is, taking into account all whose happiness is affected by the conduct. It would tend to clearness if we might call this principle, and the method based upon it, by some such name as "Universalistic Hedonism"; and I have therefore sometimes ventured to use this term, in spite of its cumbrousness.

The first doctrine from which it seems necessary to distinguish this, is Egoistic Hedonism. The difference, however, between the propositions (1) that each ought to seek his own happiness, and (2) that each ought to seek the happiness of all, is so obvious and glaring, that instead of dwelling upon it we seem rather called upon to explain how the two ever came to be confounded, or in any way included under one notion. The confusion between these two ethical theories was partly assisted by the confusion with both of the psychological theory that in voluntary actions every agent does, universally or normally, seek his own individual happiness or pleasure. Now there seems to be no *necessary* connexion between this latter proposition and any ethical theory: but in so far as there is a natural tendency to pass from psychological to ethical Hedonism, the transition must be—at least primarily—to the Egoistic phase of the latter. For clearly, from the fact that every one actually does seek his own happiness we conclude, as an immediate and obvious inference, that he ought to seek the happiness of other people (pp. 411-412).

It is evident that there may be many different ways of distributing the same quantum of happiness among the same number of persons; in order, therefore, that the Utilitarian criterion of right conduct may be as complete as possible, we



ought to know which of these ways is to be preferred. . . . Now the Utilitarian formula seems to supply no answer to this question: at least we have to supplement the principle of seeking the greatest happiness on the whole by some principle of Just or Right distribution of this happiness. The principle which most Utilitarians have either tacitly or expressly adopted is that of pure equality—as given in Bentham's formula, "everybody to count for one, and nobody for more than one." And this principle seems the only one which does not need a special justification; for, as we saw, it must be reasonable to treat any one man in the same way as any other, if there be no reason apparent for treating him differently (pp. 416-417).

#### THE PROOF OF UTILITARIANISM

The fact that certain rules are commonly received as binding, though it does not establish their self-evidence, renders it generally unnecessary to prove their authority to the Common Sense that receives them: while for the same reason a Utilitarian who claims to supersede them by a higher principle is naturally challenged, by Intuitionists no less than by Egoists, to demonstrate the legitimacy of his claim. To this challenge some Utilitarians would reply by saying that it is impossible to "prove" a first principle; and this is of course true, if by proof we mean a process which exhibits the principle in question as an inference from premises upon which it remains dependent for its certainty; for these premises, and not the inference drawn from them, would then be the real first principles. Nay, if Utilitarianism is to be *proved* to a man who already holds some other moral principles,—whether he be an Intuitional moralist, who regards as final the principles of Truth, Justice, Obedience to authority, Purity, etc., or an Egoist who regards his own interest as the ultimately reasonable end of his conduct,—it would seem

that the process must be one which establishes a conclusion actually *superior* in validity to the premises from which it starts. For the Utilitarian prescriptions of duty are *prima facie* in conflict, at certain points and under certain circumstances, both with rules which the Institutionist regards as self-evident, and with the dictates of Rational Egoism; so that Utilitarianism, if accepted at all, must be accepted as overruling Intuitionism and Egoism (pp. 419-420).

Utilitarianism has therefore to exhibit itself in the two-fold relation above described, at once negative and positive, to these formulae. The Utilitarian must, in the first place, endeavour to show to the Intuitionist that the principles of Truth, Justice, etc., have only a dependent and subordinate validity: arguing either that the principle is really only affirmed by Common Sense as a general rule admitting of exceptions and qualifications, as in the case of Truth, and that we require some further principle for systematising these exceptions and qualifications; or that the fundamental notion is vague and needs further determination, as in the case of Justice; and further, that the different rules are liable to conflict with each other, and that we require some higher principle to decide the issue thus raised; and again, that the rules are differently formulated by different persons, and that these differences admit of no Intuitional solution, while they show the vagueness and ambiguity of the common moral notions to which the Intuitionist appeals.

This part of the argument I have perhaps sufficiently developed in the preceding book. It remains to supplement this line of reasoning by developing the positive relation that exists between Utilitarianism and the Morality of Common Sense. . . . If systematic reflection upon the morality of Common Sense thus exhibits the Utilitarian principle as that to which Common Sense naturally appeals for that further development of its system which this same reflection shows

to be necessary, the proof of Utilitarianism seems as complete as it can be made (pp. 421-422).

It may be shown, I think, that the Utilitarian estimate of consequences not only supports broadly the current moral rules, but also sustains their generally received limitations and qualifications: that, again, it explains anomalies in the Morality of Common Sense, which from any other point of view must seem unsatisfactory to the reflective intellect; and moreover, where the current formula is not sufficiently precise for the guidance of conduct, while at the same time difficulties and perplexities in general accordance with the vague instincts of Common Sense, and is naturally appealed to for such solution in ordinary moral discussions. It may be shown further, that it not only supports the generally received view of the relative importance of different duties, but is also naturally called in as arbiter, where rules commonly regarded as co-ordinate come into conflict: that, again, when the same rule is interpreted somewhat differently by different persons, each naturally supports his view by urging its Utility, however strongly he may maintain the rule to be self-evident and known *a priori*: that where we meet with marked diversity of moral opinion on any point, in the same age and country, we commonly find manifest and impressive utilitarian reasons on both sides: and that finally the remarkable discrepancies found in comparing the moral codes of different ages and countries are for the most part strikingly correlated to differences in the effects of actions on happiness, or in men's foresight of, or concern for, such effects (pp. 425-426).

#### TRUTH-TELLING AN EXAMPLE

The duty of Truth-speaking is sometimes taken as a striking instance of a moral rule not resting on a Utilitarian

basis. But a careful study of the qualifications with which the common opinion of mankind actually inculcates this duty seems to lead us to an opposite result: for not only is the general utility of truth-speaking so manifest as to need no proof, but wherever this utility seems to be absent, or outweighed by particular bad consequences, we find that Common Sense at least hesitates to enforce the rule. For example, if a man be pursuing criminal ends, it is *prima facie* injurious to the community that he should be aided in his pursuit by being able to rely on the assertions of others. Here, then, deception is *prima facie* legitimate as a protection against crime: though when we consider the bad effects on habit, and through example, of even a single act of unveracity, the case is seen to be, on Utilitarian principles, doubtful: and this is just the view of Common Sense (p. 449).

Finally, when we compare the different moral codes of different ages and countries, we see that the discrepancies among them correspond, at least to a great extent, to differences either in the actual effects of actions on happiness, or in the extent to which such effects are generally foreseen—or regarded as important—by the men among whom the codes are maintained (p. 454).

#### THE METHOD OF UTILITARIANISM

If the view maintained as to the general Utilitarian basis of the Morality of Common Sense may be regarded as sufficiently established, we are now in a position to consider more closely to what method of determining right conduct the acceptance of Utilitarianism will practically lead. The most obvious method, of course, is that of Empirical Hedonism, according to which we have in each case to compare all the pleasures and pains that can be foreseen as probable results of the different alternatives of conduct presented to us, and

to adopt the alternative which seems likely to lead to the greatest happiness on the whole (p. 460).

If, then, we are to regard the morality of Common Sense as a machinery of rules, habits, and sentiments, roughly and generally but not precisely or completely adapted to the production of the greatest possible happiness for sentient beings generally; and if, on the other hand, we have to accept it as the actually established machinery for attaining this end, which we cannot replace at once by any other, but can only gradually modify; it remains to consider the practical effects of the complex and balanced relation in which a scientific Utilitarian thus seems to stand to the Positive Morality of his age and country.

Generally speaking, he will clearly conform to it, and endeavour to promote its development in others. For, though the imperfection that we find in all the actual conditions of human existence—we may even say in the universe at large as judged from a human point of view—is ultimately found even in Morality itself, in so far as this is contemplated as Positive; still, practically, we are much less concerned with correcting and improving than we are with realising and enforcing it. The Utilitarian must repudiate altogether that temper of rebellion against the established morality, as something purely external and conventional, into which the reflective mind is always apt to fall when it is first convinced that the established rules are not intrinsically reasonable. He must, of course, also repudiate as superstitious that awe of it as an absolute or Divine code which Intuitionist moralists inculcate. Still, he will naturally contemplate it with reverence and wonder, as a marvellous product of nature, the result of long centuries of growth, showing in many parts the same fine adaptation of means to complex exigencies as the most elaborate structures of physical organisms exhibit: he will handle it with respectful delicacy as a mechanism, constructed of the fluid element of opinions and dis-

positions, by the indispensable aid of which the actual *quantum* of human happiness is continually being produced; a mechanism which no 'politicians or philosophers' could create, yet without which the harder and coarser machinery of Positive Law could not be permanently maintained, and the life of man would become—as Hobbes forcibly expresses it—"solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Still, as this actual moral order is admittedly imperfect, it will be the Utilitarian's duty to aid in improving it; just as the most orderly, law-abiding member of a modern civilised society includes the reform of laws in his conception of political duty. We have therefore to consider by what method he will ascertain the particular modifications of positive morality which it would be practically expedient to attempt to introduce, at any given time and place. Here our investigation seems, after all, to leave Empirical Hedonism as the only method ordinarily applicable for the ultimate decision of such problems—at least until the science of Sociology shall have been really constructed (pp. 475-476).

#### THE MUTUAL RELATIONS OF THE THREE METHODS

In the greater part of this treatise we have been employed in examining three methods of determining right conduct, which are for the most part found more or less vaguely combined in the practical reasonings of ordinary men, but which it has been my aim to develop as separately as possible. A complete synthesis of these different methods is not attempted in the present work: at the same time it would hardly be satisfactory to conclude the analysis of them without some discussion of their mutual relations. . . . We have found that the common antithesis between Intuitionists and Utilitarians must be entirely discarded: since such abstract moral principles as we can admit to be really self-evident are not only not incompatible with a Utilitarian

system, but even seem required to furnish a rational basis for such a system. Thus we have seen that the essence of Justice or Equity (in so far as it is clear and certain), is that different individuals are not to be treated differently, except on grounds of universal application; and that such grounds, again, are supplied by the principle of Universal Benevolence, that sets before each man the happiness of all others as an object of pursuit no less worthy than his own; while other time-honoured virtues seem to be fitly explained as special manifestations of impartial benevolence under various circumstances of human life, or else as habits and dispositions indispensable to the maintenance of prudent or beneficent behaviour under the seductive force of various non-rational impulses. . . .

It remains for us to consider the relation of the two species of Hedonism which we have distinguished as Universalistic and Egoistic. . . . Even if a man admits the self-evidence of the principle of Rational Benevolence, he may still hold that his own happiness is an end which it is irrational for him to sacrifice to any other; and that therefore a harmony between the maxim of Prudence and the maxim of Rational Benevolence must be somehow demonstrated, if morality is to be made completely rational. This latter view, indeed, appears to me, on the whole, the view of Common Sense: and it is that which I myself hold. It thus becomes needful to examine how far and in what way the required demonstration can be effected.

While in any tolerable state of society the performance of duties towards others and the exercise of social virtues seem *generally* likely to coincide with the attainment of the greatest possible happiness in the long run for the virtuous agent, still the *universality* and *completeness* of this coincidence are at least incapable of empirical proof (pp. 496–498).

If, however, we may assume the existence of such a Be-

ing, as God, by the *consensus* of theologians, is conceived to be, it seems that Utilitarians may legitimately infer the existence of Divine sanction to the code of social duty as constructed on a Utilitarian basis; and such sanctions would, of course, suffice to make it always every one's interest to promote universal happiness to the best of his knowledge. It is, however, desirable, before we conclude, to examine carefully the validity of this assumption, in so far as it is supported on ethical grounds alone. For by the result of such an examination will be determined, as we now see, the very important question whether ethical science can be constructed on an independent basis; or whether it is forced to borrow a fundamental and indispensable premise from Theology or some similar source. In order fairly to perform this examination, let us reflect upon the clearest and most certain of our moral intuitions. I find that I undoubtedly seem to perceive, as clearly and certainly as I see any axiom in Arithmetic or Geometry, that it is 'right' and 'reasonable' for me to treat others as I should think that I myself ought to be treated under similar conditions, and to do what I believe to be ultimately conducive to universal Good or Happiness. But I cannot find inseparably connected with this any cognition that there actually is a Supreme Being who will adequately reward me for obeying these rules of duty, or punish me for violating them. Or,—omitting the strictly theological element of the proposition,—I may say that I do not find in my moral consciousness any intuition, claiming to be clear and certain, that the performance of duty will be adequately rewarded and its violation punished. I feel indeed a desire, apparently inseparable from the moral sentiments, that this result may be realised not only in my own case but universally; but the mere existence of the desire would not go far to establish the probability of its fulfilment, considering the large proportion of human desires that experience shows to be doomed to disappointment. I also judge



that in a certain sense this result *ought* to be realised: in this judgment, however, 'ought' is not used in a strictly ethical meaning; it only expresses the vital need that our Practical Reason feels of proving or postulating this connexion of Virtue and self-interest, if it is to be made consistent with itself. For the negation of the connexion must force us to admit an ultimate and fundamental contradiction in our apparent intuitions of what is Reasonable in conduct; and from this admission it would seem to follow that the apparently intuitive operation of the Practical Reason, manifested in these contradictory judgments, is after all illusory.

I do not mean that if we gave up the hope of attaining a practical solution of this fundamental contradiction, through any legitimately obtained conclusion or postulate as to the moral order of the world, it would become reasonable for us to abandon morality altogether; but it would seem necessary to abandon the idea of rationalising it completely. We should doubtless still, not only from self-interest, but also through sympathy and sentiments protective of social well-being, imparted by education and sustained by communication with other men, feel a desire for the general observance of rules conducive to general happiness; and practical reason would still impel us decisively to the performance of duty in the more ordinary cases in which what is recognised as duty is in harmony with self-interest properly understood. But in the rarer cases of a recognised conflict between self-interest and duty, practical reason, being divided against itself, would cease to be a motive on either side; the conflict would have to be decided by the comparative preponderance of one or other of two groups of non-rational impulses.

If then the reconciliation of duty and self-interest is to be regarded as a hypothesis logically necessary to avoid a fundamental contradiction in one chief department of our thought, it remains to ask how far this necessity constitutes a sufficient reason for accepting this hypothesis. This, how-

ever, is a profoundly difficult and controverted question, the discussion of which belongs rather to a treatise on General Philosophy than to a work on the Methods of Ethics: as it could not be satisfactorily answered, without a general examination of the criteria of true and false beliefs. Those who hold that the edifice of physical science is really constructed of conclusions logically inferred from self-evident premises, may reasonably demand that any practical judgments claiming philosophic certainty should be based on an equally firm foundation. If on the other hand we find that in our supposed knowledge of the world of nature propositions are commonly taken to be universally true, which yet seem to rest on no other grounds than that we have a strong disposition to accept them, and that they are indispensable to the systematic coherence of our beliefs,—it will be more difficult to reject a similarly supported assumption in ethics, without opening the door to universal scepticism (pp. 506–509).

## CHAPTER XV

### G. E. MOORE

(1893—)

SIDGWICK, as we have seen, brought to the consideration of ethics the spirit of science—its respect for facts, its desire to systematize materials, its unwillingness to outtalk its information, even though desire should point the way. G. E. Moore, a disciple of Sidgwick, betters his master by illustrating throughout a scientific reliance upon analysis as the proper method for ethics. As the opening paragraph of the following selections indicates, he sets great stead upon men's knowing what they are about before setting out.

This insistence upon clarity and precision in ethics can best be understood in relation to the wider philosophical movement of which it is a part. English philosophy has been primarily empirical until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then came to fruition the Romantic movement in literature and along with it came, largely from Germany, metaphysical idealism. T. H. Green, at Oxford, and after him F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet became the shining lights in British philosophy, and Oxford once more the locus of the British *Zeitgeist*. What sort of *Weltanschauung* resulted therefrom we have seen, if not elsewhere, at least in the selections from Green. Science was in spirit deprecated, evolution denied moral significance, religion hailed anew as ally for life, and human guidance sought from some undetailed hunger for the Whole. In one word, morality became metaphysical.

The natural reaction to this, once idealism approached

the human saturation point, was an emphatic assertion of the relevancy of science for philosophy. While empirical social scientists, like Westermarck and Hobhouse, were hunting the origin of moral ideas among primitive peoples and striving to trace their development into contemporary culture, others, like Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, were importing the method of science into philosophy as a whole. The contemporary revival of realism in England and America was pro-scientific, anti-idealistic. Breaking up the idealistic Whole into at least two parts—mind and matter—it set the world of nature—the materials of science—on its own feet, and declared it real whether known by any mind or not. Relations are external and do not change the nature of the things related. Knowing as such makes no difference to the known. In ethics this movement became a revolt against metaphysics. The object of moral knowledge has, like every other object of knowledge, an independent being. Accurate analysis is the way to discover the moral object, evaluation of it in complete isolation, the way to test it, and mastery of causal laws through science, the way to realize it.

There is one compensation in ethics for this analytic emphasis, developed fully and highly evaluated by Moore—the principle of organic unities. This principle prevents the technique of analysis from disintegrating the world of value into exclusive atomistic parts. The principle is that “the value of a whole bears no regular proportion to the sum of the values of its parts.” “It is certain,” explains our author, “that a good thing may exist in such a relation to another good thing that the value of the whole thus formed is immensely greater than the sum of the values of the two good things. It is certain that a whole formed of a good thing and an indifferent thing may have immensely greater value than that good thing itself possesses. It is certain that two bad things or a bad thing and an indifferent thing may form

a whole much worse than the sum of badness of its parts. *The value of a whole must not be assumed to be the same as the sum of the values of its parts.*"

One discovers quickly in the following selections that for Moore " 'good' is the notion upon which all Ethics depends," that it is objective to human feeling and cognition, that it is indefinable though not unknowable, and that it is a fallacy to identify good with any other object or quality. (Note the motto of *Principia Ethica*: "Everything is what it is, and not another thing.") The student would discover should he read further than our selections go that the other great fallacy of ethical speculation is a metaphysical one—the notion that what is good can in any sense be identified with or be deduced from what is real. Moore does not deprecate metaphysics as such, but only as a source or guide for ethics. It is easy to see the reason for this: good is self-evident, and obligation can be determined only by a knowledge of scientific sequences. The one task of ethics is too simple to need metaphysical aid, the other too complex to suffer it.

The student may be led to hope that out of simple self-evidence as foundation for morality and science as guide to conduct the solution of his ethical problems is at hand: he cannot err as to the self-evident, and surely science will not fail him as means to the concrete good. However logical this expectation appears, it is not the conclusion to which Moore himself comes. Quite to the contrary, it follows from "the inadequacy of our causal knowledge that we never have any reason to suppose that an action is our duty; we can never be sure that any action will produce the greatest value possible." Goodness is self-evident, but, alas, duty is not. "Ethics, therefore, is quite unable to give us a list of duties." All ethics can do for conduct is to make probability our guide to a good self-evidently known but never certainly achievable.

This is a modest conclusion, as perhaps befits a scientific

approach to morality. Probability is our guide elsewhere. Why not here? Customary duties remain, and they are probably right. It can hardly fail to challenge a growing mind, however, to some conclusion of its own to discover that two ethical systems as far apart as Green's and Moore's—idealism and realism—converge upon this practical result: fulfill the expectations that others have upon you, and for the rest—who knows?

### PRINCIPIA ETHICA<sup>1</sup>

#### PERSONAL STANDPOINT

It appears to me that in Ethics, as in all other philosophical studies, the difficulties and disagreements, of which its history is full, are mainly due to a very simple cause: namely to the attempt to answer questions, without first discovering precisely *what* question it is which you desire to answer. I do not know how far this source of error would be done away, if philosophers would *try* to discover what question they were asking, before they set about to answer it; for the work of analysis and distinction is often very difficult: we may often fail to make the necessary discovery, even though we make a definite attempt to do so. But I am inclined to think that in many cases a resolute attempt would be sufficient to ensure success; so that, if only this attempt were made, many of the most glaring difficulties and disagreements in philosophy would disappear. At all events, philosophers seem, in general, not to make the attempt; and, whether in consequence of this omission or not, they are constantly endeavouring to prove that "Yes" or "No" will answer questions, to which *neither* answer is correct, owing to the fact that what they have before their minds is not

<sup>1</sup> These readings are taken from the Second Impression, 1922. Cambridge University Press. Footnotes are omitted and sub-heads added.

one question, but several, to some of which the true answer is "No," to others "Yes" (vi).

### THE THREE QUESTIONS OF ETHICS

All ethical questions fall under one or other of three classes. The first class contains but one question—the question What is the nature of that peculiar predicate, the relation of which to other things constitutes the object of all other ethical investigations? or, in other words, What is *meant* by good? There remain two classes of questions with regard to the relation of this predicate to other things. We may ask either (1) To what things and in what degree does this predicate directly attach? What things are good in themselves? or (2) By what means shall we be able to make what exists in the world as good as possible? What causal relations hold between what is best in itself and other things (p. 37)?

#### THE FIRST QUESTION: WHAT IS MEANT BY THE GOOD?

The peculiar predicate, by reference to which the sphere of Ethics must be defined, is simple, unanalysable, indefinable (p. 37). If I am asked "What is good?" my answer is that good is good, and that is the end of the matter. Or if I am asked "How good is to be defined?" my answer is that it cannot be defined, and that is all I have to say about it. To readers who are familiar with philosophic terminology, I can express the importance of these answers by saying that they amount to this: That propositions about the good are all of them synthetic and never analytic; and that is plainly no trivial matter. And the same thing may be expressed more popularly, by saying that, if I am right, then nobody can foist upon us such an axiom as that "Pleasure is the only good" or that "The good is the desired" on the pretence that this is "the very meaning of the word."

Let us, then, consider this position. My point is that "good" is a simple notion, just as "yellow" is a simple notion; that, just as you cannot, by any manner of means, explain to any one who does not already know it, what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is. Definitions of the kind that I was asking for, definitions which describe the real nature of the object or notion denoted by a word, and which do not merely tell us what the word is used to mean, are only possible when the object or notion in question is something complex.

Consider yellow, for example. We may try to define it, by describing its physical equivalent; we may state what kind of light-vibrations must stimulate the normal eye, in order that we may perceive it. But a moment's reflection is sufficient to shew that those light-vibrations are not themselves what we mean by yellow. *They* are not what we perceive. Indeed we should never have been able to discover their existence, unless we had first been struck by the patent difference of quality between the different colours. The most we can be entitled to say of those vibrations is that they are what corresponds in space to the yellow which we actually perceive.

Yet a mistake of this simple kind has commonly been made about "good." It may be true that all things which are good are *also* something else, just as it is true that all things which are yellow produce a certain kind of vibration in the light. And it is a fact, that Ethics aims at discovering what are those other properties belonging to all things which are good. But far too many philosophers have thought that when they named those other properties they were actually defining good; that these properties, in fact, were simply not "other," but absolutely and entirely the same with goodness. This view I propose to call the "naturalistic fallacy" . . . —the fallacy which consist in identifying the simple notion which we mean by "good" with some other notion.



"Good," then, if we mean by it that quality which we assert to belong to a thing, when we say that the thing is good, is incapable of any definition, in the most important sense of that word. The most important sense of "definition" is that in which a definition states what are the parts which invariably compose a certain whole; and in this sense "good" has no definition because it is simple and has no parts. It is one of those innumerable objects of thought which are themselves incapable of definition, because they are the ultimate terms by reference to which whatever is capable of definition must be defined (pp. 6-10).

The prevalence of Hedonism has been mainly due to what I have called the naturalistic fallacy—the failure to distinguish clearly that unique and indefinable quality which we mean by good (p. 59). . . . There is ample reason to suppose that Hedonism is in general a form of Naturalism—that its acceptance is generally due to the naturalistic fallacy. It is, indeed, only when we have detected this fallacy, when we have become clearly aware of the unique object which is meant by "good," that we are able to give to Hedonism the precise definition. . . . "Nothing is good but pleasure" (p. 61).

Hedonism is in error, so far as it maintains that pleasure alone, and not the consciousness of pleasure, is the sole good. . . . It is falsely supposed that, since pleasure must always be accompanied by consciousness (which is, itself, extremely doubtful), therefore it is indifferent whether we say that pleasure or the consciousness of pleasure is the sole good. *Practically*, of course, it would be indifferent at which we aimed, if it were certain that we could not get the one without the other; but where the question is of what is good in itself—where we ask: For the sake of what is it desirable to get that which we aim at?—the distinction is by no means unimportant. Here we are placed before an exclusive alternative. *Either* pleasure by itself (even though we can't get

it) would be all that is desirable, *or* a consciousness of it would be more desirable still. Both these propositions cannot be true; and I think it is plain that the latter is true; whence it follows that pleasure is *not* the sole good.

Still it may be said that, even if consciousness of pleasure, and not pleasure alone, is the sole good, this conclusion is not very damaging to Hedonism. It may be said that Hedonists have always meant by pleasure the consciousness of pleasure, though they have not been at pains to say so; and this, I think is, in the main, true. To correct their formula in this respect could, therefore, only be a matter of practical importance, if it is possible to produce pleasure without producing consciousness of it. But even this importance, which I think our conclusion so far really has, is, I admit, comparatively slight. What I wish to maintain is that even consciousness of pleasure is not the sole good: that, indeed, it is absurd so to regard it. And the chief importance of what has been said so far lies in the fact that the same method, which shews that consciousness of pleasure is more valuable than pleasure, seems also to shew consciousness of pleasure is itself far less valuable than other things. The supposition that consciousness of pleasure is the sole good is due to a neglect of the same distinctions which have encouraged the careless assertion that pleasure is the sole good.

The method which I employed in order to shew that pleasure itself was not the sole good, was that of considering what value we should attach to it, if it existed in absolute isolation, stripped of all its usual accompaniments. And this is, in fact, the only method that can be safely used, when we wish to discover what degree of value a thing has in itself (pp. 90-91).

"No one," says Professor Sidgwick, "would consider it rational to aim at the production of beauty in external nature, apart from any possible contemplation of it by human beings." Well, I may say at once, that I, for one, do con-

sider this rational; and let us see if I cannot get any one to agree with me. Consider what this admission really means. It entitles us to put the following case. Let us imagine one world exceedingly beautiful. Imagine it as beautiful as you can; put into it whatever on this earth you most admire—mountains, rivers, the sea; trees, and sunsets, stars and moon. Imagine these all combined in the most exquisite proportions, so that no one thing jars against another, but each contributes to increase the beauty of the whole. And then imagine the ugliest world you can possibly conceive. Imagine it simply one heap of filth, containing everything that is most disgusting to us, for whatever reason, and the whole, as far as may be, without one redeeming feature. Such a pair of worlds we are entitled to compare: they fall within Prof. Sidgwick's meaning, and the comparison is highly relevant to it. The only thing we are not entitled to imagine is that any human being ever has or ever, by any possibility, can, live in either, can ever see and enjoy the beauty of the one or hate the foulness of the other. Well, even so, supposing them quite apart from any possible contemplation by human beings; still, is it irrational to hold that it is better that the beautiful world should exist, than the one which is ugly? Would it not be well, in any case, to do what we could to produce it rather than the other? Certainly I cannot help thinking that it would (pp. 83–84).

It seems to me, then, that if we place fairly before us the question: Is consciousness of pleasure the sole good? the answer must be: No. And with this the last defence of Hedonism has been broken down. In order to put the question fairly we must isolate consciousness of pleasure. We must ask: Suppose we were conscious of pleasure only, and of nothing else, not even that we *were* conscious, would that state of things, however great the quantity, be very desirable? No one, I think, can suppose it so. On the other hand, it seems quite plain, that we do regard as very desirable,

many complicated states of mind in which the consciousness of pleasure is combined with consciousness of other things—states which we call “enjoyment of” so and so. If this is correct, then it follows that consciousness of pleasure is not the sole good, and that many other states, in which it is included as a part, are much better than it. Once we recognise the principle of organic unities, any objection to this conclusion, founded on the supposed fact that the other elements of such states have no value in themselves, must disappear. And I do not know that I need say any more in refutation of Hedonism (pp. 95–96).

THE SECOND QUESTION: WHAT THINGS ARE GOOD  
IN THEMSELVES?

In order to arrive at a correct decision on the first part of this question, “What things have intrinsic value, and in what degree?”, it is necessary to consider what things are such that, if they existed *by themselves*, in absolute isolation, we should yet judge their existence to be good; and, in order to decide upon the relative *degrees* of value of different things, we must similarly consider what comparative value seems to attach to the isolated existence of each. By employing this method, we shall guard against two errors, which seem to have been the chief causes which have vitiated previous conclusions on the subject. The first of these is (1) that which consists in supposing that what seems absolutely necessary here and now, for the existence of anything good—what we cannot do without—is therefore good in itself. If we isolate such things, which are mere means to good, and suppose a world in which they alone, and nothing but they, existed, their intrinsic worthlessness becomes apparent. And, secondly, there is the more subtle error (2) which consists in neglecting the principle of organic unities. This error is committed, when it is supposed, that, if one part of a whole has no intrinsic value, the value of the whole must

reside entirely in the other parts. It has, in this way, been commonly supposed, that, if all valuable wholes could be seen to have one and only one common property, the wholes must be valuable solely *because* they possess this property; and the illusion is greatly strengthened, if the common property in question seems, considered by itself, to have more value than the other parts of such wholes, considered by themselves. But, if we consider the property in question, *in isolation*, and then compare it with the whole, of which it forms a part, it may become easily apparent that, existing by itself, the property in question has not nearly so much value, as has the whole to which it belongs, thus, if we compare the value of a certain amount of pleasure, *existing absolutely by itself*, with the value of certain "enjoyments," containing an equal amount of pleasure, it may become apparent that the "enjoyment" is much better than the pleasure, and also, in some cases, much worse. In such a case it is plain that the "enjoyment" does *not* owe its value *solely* to the pleasure it contains, although it might easily have appeared to do so, when we only considered the other constituents of the enjoyment, and seemed to see that, without the pleasure, they would have had no value. It is now apparent, on the contrary, that the whole "enjoyment" owes its value quite equally to the presence of the other constituents, *even though* it may be true that the pleasure is the only constituent having any value by itself. And similarly, if we are told that all things owe their value solely to the fact that they are "realisations of the true self," we may easily refute this statement, by asking whether the predicate that is meant by "realising the true self," supposing that it could exist alone, would have any value whatsoever. Either the *thing*, which does "realise the true self," has intrinsic value or it has not; and if it has, then it certainly does not owe its value solely to the fact that it realises the true self.

If now, we use this method of absolute isolation, and

guard against these errors, it appears that the question we have to answer is far less difficult than the controversies of Ethics might have led us to expect. Indeed, once the meaning of the question is clearly understood, the answer to it, in its main outlines, appears to be so obvious, that it runs the risk of seeming to be a platitude. By far the most valuable things, which we know or can imagine, are certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects. No one, probably, who has asked himself the question, has ever doubted that personal affection and the appreciation of what is beautiful in Art or Nature, are good in themselves; nor, if we consider strictly what things are worth having *purely for their own sakes*, does it appear probable that any one will think that anything else has *nearly* so great a value as the things which are included under these two heads. . . . This simple truth may, indeed, be said to be universally recognised. What has *not* been recognised is that it is the ultimate and fundamental truth of Moral Philosophy. That it is only for the sake of these things—in order that as much of them as possible may at some time exist—that any one can be justified in performing any public or private duty; that they are the *raison d'être* of virtue; that it is they—these complex wholes *themselves*, and not any constituent or characteristic of them—that form the rational ultimate end of human action and the sole criterion of social progress: these appear to be truths which have been generally overlooked.

That they are truths—that personal affections and æsthetic enjoyments include *all* the greatest, and *by far* the greatest, goods we can imagine—will, I hope, appear more plainly in the course of that analysis of them, to which I shall now proceed. All the things, which I have meant to include under the above descriptions, are highly complex *organic unities*; and in discussing the consequences, which follow

from this fact, and the elements of which they are composed, I may hope at the same time both to confirm and to define my position.

I propose to begin by examining what I have called æsthetic enjoyments, since the case of personal affections presents some additional complications. It is, I think, universally admitted that the proper appreciation of a beautiful object is a good thing in itself; and my question is: What are the main elements included in such an appreciation?

(1) It is plain that in those instances of æsthetic appreciation, which we think most valuable, there is included, not merely a bare cognition of what is beautiful in the objects, but also some kind of feeling or emotion. It is not sufficient that a man should merely see the beautiful qualities in a picture and know that they are beautiful, in order that we may give his state of mind the highest praise. We require that he should also *appreciate* the beauty of that which he sees and which he knows to be beautiful—that he should feel and see *its beauty*. And by these expressions we certainly mean that he should have an appropriate emotion towards the beautiful qualities which he cognises (pp. 187–190).

(2) In the last paragraph I have pointed out the two facts, that the presence of some emotion is necessary to give any very high value to a state of æsthetic appreciation, and that, on the other hand, this same emotion, in itself, may have little or no value: it follows that these emotions give to the wholes of which they form a part a value far greater than that which they themselves possess. The same is obviously true of the cognitive element which must be combined with these emotions in order to form these highly valuable wholes; and the present paragraph will attempt to define what is meant by this cognitive element, so far as to guard against a possible misunderstanding. When we talk of seeing a beautiful object, or, more generally, of the cognition or consciousness of a beautiful object, we may mean by these

expressions something which forms no part of any valuable whole. There is an ambiguity in the use of the term "object," which has probably been responsible for as many enormous errors in philosophy and psychology as any other single cause. This ambiguity may easily be detected by considering the proposition, which, though a contradiction in terms, is obviously true: That when a man sees a beautiful picture, he may see nothing beautiful whatever. The ambiguity consists in the fact that, by the "object" of vision (or cognition), may be meant *either* the qualities actually seen *or* all the qualities possessed by the thing seen. Thus in our case: when it is said that the picture is beautiful, it is meant that it contains qualities which are beautiful; when it is said that the man sees the picture, it is meant that he sees a great number of the qualities contained in the picture; and when it is said that, nevertheless, he sees nothing beautiful, it is meant that he does *not* see those qualities of the picture which are beautiful. When, therefore, I speak of the cognition of a beautiful object, as an essential element in a valuable æsthetic appreciation, I must be understood to mean only the cognition of *the beautiful qualities* possessed by that object, and *not* the cognition of other qualities of the object possessing them (pp. 190-191).

(3) Connected with the distinction just made between "object" in the sense of the qualities actually before the mind, and "object" in the sense of the whole thing which possesses the qualities actually before the mind, is another distinction of the utmost importance for a correct analysis of the constituents necessary to a valuable whole. It is commonly and rightly thought that to see beauty in a thing which has no beauty is in some way inferior to seeing beauty in that which really has it (p. 192).

The question I am putting is this: Whether the *whole* constituted by the fact that there is an emotional contemplation of a beautiful object, which both is believed to be and is



*real*, does not derive some of its value from the fact that the object *is real*? I am asking whether the value of this whole, *as a whole*, is not greater than that of those which differ from it, *either* by the absence of belief, with or without truth, *or*, belief being present, by the mere absence of truth? I am not asking *either* whether it is not superior to them as a means (which it certainly is), *nor* whether it may not contain a more valuable *part*, namely, the existence of the object in question. My question is solely whether the existence of its object does not constitute an addition to the value of the whole, quite distinct from the addition constituted by the fact that this whole does contain a valuable part.

If, now, we put this question, I cannot avoid thinking that it should receive an affirmative answer. We can put it clearly by the method of isolation; and the sole decision must rest with our reflective judgment upon it, as thus clearly put. We can guard against the bias produced by a consideration of value *as a means* by supposing the case of an illusion as complete and permanent as illusions in this world never can be. We can imagine the case of a single person, enjoying throughout eternity the contemplation of scenery as beautiful, and intercourse with persons as admirable, as can be imagined; while yet the whole of the objects of his cognition are absolutely unreal. I think we should definitely pronounce the existence of a universe, which consisted solely of such a person, to be *greatly* inferior in value to one in which the objects, in the existence of which he believes, did really exist just as he believes them to do; and that it would be thus inferior *not only* because it would lack the goods which consist in the existence of the objects in question, but *also* merely because his belief would be false. That it would be inferior *for this reason alone* follows if we admit, what also appears to me certain, that the case of a person, merely imagining, without believing, the beautiful objects in question, would, *although these objects really existed*, be yet inferior to that

of the person who also believed in their existence. For here all the additional good, which consists in the existence of the objects, is present, and yet there still seems to be a great difference in value between this case and that in which their existence is believed. . . .

If all this be so, we have, in this third section, added to our two former results the third result that a true belief in the reality of an object greatly increases the value of many valuable wholes. Just as in sections (1) and (2) it was maintained that æsthetic and affectionate emotions had little or no value apart from the cognition of appropriate objects, and that the cognition of these objects had little or no value apart from the appropriate emotion, so that the whole, in which both were combined, had a value greatly in excess of the sum of the values of its parts; so, according to this section, if there be added to these wholes a true belief in the reality of the object, the new whole thus formed has a value greatly in excess of the sum obtained by adding the value of the true belief, considered in itself, to that of our original wholes. This new case only differs from the former in this, that, whereas the true belief, by itself, has quite as little value as either of the two other constituents taken singly, yet they, taken together, seem to form a whole of very great value, whereas this is not the case with the two wholes which might be formed by adding the true belief to either of the others.

The importance of the result of this section seems to lie mainly in two of its consequences. (1) That it affords some justification for the immense intrinsic value, which seems to be commonly attributed to the mere *knowledge* of some truths, and which was expressly attributed to some kinds of knowledge by Plato and Aristotle. Perfect knowledge has indeed competed with perfect love for the position of Ideal. If the results of this section are correct, it appears that knowledge, though having little or no value by itself, is an

absolutely essential constituent in the highest goods, and contributes immensely to their value. And it appears that this function may be performed not only by that case of knowledge, which we have chiefly considered, namely, knowledge of the reality of the beautiful object cognised, but also by knowledge of the numerical identity of this object with that which really exists, and by the knowledge that the existence of that object is truly good. Indeed all knowledge, which is directly concerned with the nature of the constituents of a beautiful object, would seem capable of adding greatly to the value of the contemplation of that object, although, by itself, such knowledge would have no value at all. —And (2) the second important consequence, which follows from this section, is that the presence of true belief may, in spite of a great inferiority in the value of the emotion and the beauty of its object, constitute with them a whole equal or superior in value to wholes, in which the emotion and beauty are superior, but in which a true belief is wanting or a false belief present. In this way we may justify the attribution of equal or superior value to an appreciation of an inferior real object, as compared with the appreciation of a greatly superior object which is a mere creature of the imagination. Thus a just appreciation of nature and of real persons may maintain its equality with an equally just appreciation of the products of artistic imagination, in spite of much greater beauty in the latter. And similarly though God may be admitted to be a more perfect object than any actual human being, the love of God may yet be inferior to human love, *if* God does not exist (pp. 197–200).

It will be remembered that I began this survey of great unmixed goods, by dividing all the greatest goods we know into the two classes of æsthetic enjoyments, on the one hand, and the pleasures of human intercourse or of personal affection, on the other. I postponed the consideration of the latter on the ground that they presented additional compli-

cations. In what this additional complication consists, will now be evident; and I have already been obliged to take account of it, in discussing the contribution to value made by true belief. It consists in the fact that in the case of personal affection, the object itself is not *merely* beautiful, while possessed of little or no intrinsic value, but is itself, in part at least, of great intrinsic value. All the constituents which we have found to be necessary to the most valuable emotion, cognition of truly beautiful qualities, and true belief, are equally necessary here; but here we have the additional fact that the object must be not only truly beautiful, but also truly good in a high degree.

It is evident that this additional complication only occurs in so far as there is included in the object of personal affection some of the *mental* qualities of the person towards whom the affection is felt. And I think it may be admitted that, wherever the affection is most valuable, the appreciation of mental qualities must form a large part of it, and that the presence of this part makes the whole far more valuable than it could have been without it. But it seems very doubtful whether this appreciation, by itself, can possess as much value as the whole in which it is combined with an appreciation of the appropriate *corporeal* expression of the mental qualities in question. It is certain that in all actual cases of valuable affection, the bodily expressions of character, whether by looks, by words, or by actions, do form a part of the object towards which the affection is felt, and that the fact of their inclusion appears to heighten the value of the whole state. It is, indeed, very difficult to imagine what the cognition of mental qualities *alone*, unaccompanied by *any* corporeal expression, would be like; and, in so far as we succeed in making this abstraction, the whole considered certainly appears to have less value. I therefore conclude that the importance of an admiration of admirable mental qualities lies chiefly in the immense superiority of a whole,

in which it forms a part, to one in which it is absent, and not in any high degree of intrinsic value which it possesses by itself. It even appears to be doubtful, whether, in itself, it possesses so much value as the appreciation of mere corporeal beauty undoubtedly does possess; that is to say, whether the appreciation of what has great intrinsic value is so valuable as the appreciation of what is merely beautiful (pp. 203-204).

I have now completed my examination into the nature of those great positive goods, which do not appear to include among their constituents anything positively evil or ugly, though they include much which is in itself indifferent. And I wish to point out certain conclusions which appear to follow, with regard to the nature of the Summum Bonum, or that state of things which would be the most perfect we can conceive. Those idealistic philosophers, whose views agree most closely with those here advocated, in that they deny pleasure to be the sole good and regard what is completely good as having some complexity, have usually represented a purely spiritual state of existence as the Ideal. Regarding matter as essentially imperfect, if not positively evil, they have concluded that the total absence of all material properties is necessary to a state of perfection. Now, according to what has been said, this view would be correct so far as it asserts that any great good must be *mental*, and so far as it asserts that purely material existence, *by itself*, can have little or no value. The superiority of the spiritual over the material has, in a sense, been amply vindicated. But it does not follow, from this superiority, that a perfect state of things must be one, from which all material properties are rigidly excluded: on the contrary, if our conclusions are correct, it would seem to be the case that a state of things, in which they are included, must be vastly better than any conceivable state in which they were absent. In order to see that this is so, the chief thing necessary to be considered is

*exactly what it is* which we declare to be good when we declare that the appreciation of beauty in Art and Nature is so. That this appreciation is good, the philosophers in question do not for the most part deny. But, if we admit it, then we should remember Butler's maxim that: Everything is what it is, and not another thing. I have tried to shew, and I think it is too evident to be disputed, that such appreciation is an organic unity, a complex whole; and that, in its most undoubted instances, part of what is included in this whole is a *cognition of material qualities*, and particularly of a vast variety of what are called *secondary* qualities. If, then, it is *this* whole, which we know to be good, and not another thing, then we know that material qualities, even though they be perfectly worthless in themselves, are yet essential constituents of what is far from worthless (pp. 205–206). . . . To deny and exclude matter, is to deny and exclude the best we know (p. 207).

### THE THIRD QUESTION: WHAT OUGHT WE TO DO?

The answering of this question constitutes the third great division of ethical enquiry. It introduces into Ethics an entirely new question—the question what things are related *as causes* to that which is good in itself; and this question can only be answered by an entirely new method—the method of empirical investigation; by means of which causes are discovered in the other sciences. To ask what kind of actions we ought to perform, or what kind of conduct is right, is to ask what kind of effects such action and conduct will produce. Not a single question in practical Ethics can be answered except by a causal generalisation. All such questions do, indeed, *also* involve an ethical judgment proper—the judgment that certain effects are better, in themselves, than others. But they *do* assert that these better things are effects—are causally connected with the actions in questions. Every

judgment in practical Ethics may be reduced to the form: This is a cause of that good thing. . . .

What I wish first to point out is that "right," does and can mean nothing but "cause of a good result," and is thus identical with "useful"; whence it follows that the end always will justify the means, and that no action which is not justified by its results can be right. . . . Our "duty," therefore, can only be defined as that action, which will cause more good to exist in the Universe than any possible alternative. And what is "right" or "morally permissible" only differs from this, as what will *not* cause *less* good than any possible alternative. When, therefore, Ethics presumes to assert that certain ways of acting are "duties" it presumes to assert that to act in those ways will always produce the greatest possible sum of good. If we are told that to "do no murder" is a duty, we are told that the action, whatever it may be, which is called murder, will under no circumstances cause so much good to exist in the Universe as its avoidance.

But, if this be recognised, several most important consequences follow, with regard to the relation of Ethics to conduct.

(1) It is plain that no moral law is self-evident, as has commonly been held by the Intuitionist school of moralists. The Intuitionist view of Ethics consists in the supposition that certain rules, stating that certain actions are always to be done or to be omitted, may be taken as self-evident premises. I have shewn with regard to judgments of what is *good in itself*, that this is the case: no reason can be given for them. But it is the essence of Intuitionism to suppose that rules of action—statements not of what ought to *be*, but of what we ought to *do*—are in the same sense intuitively certain. Plausibility has been lent to this view by the fact that we do undoubtedly make immediate judgments that certain actions are obligatory or wrong: we are thus often intuitively certain of our duty, *in a psychological sense*. But, nevertheless,

these judgments are not self-evident and cannot be taken as ethical premises, since, as has now been shewn, they are capable of being confirmed or refuted by an investigation of causes and effects. It is, indeed, possible that some of our immediate intuitions are true; but since *what* we intuit, *what* conscience tells us, is that certain actions will always produce the greatest sum of good possible under the circumstances, it is plain that reasons can be given, which will shew the deliverances of conscience to be true or false.

(2) In order to shew that any action is a duty, it is necessary to know both what are the other conditions, which will, conjointly with it, determine its effects; to know exactly what will be the effects of these conditions and to know all the events which will be in any way affected by our action throughout an infinite future. We must have all this causal knowledge, and further we must know accurately the degree of value of the action itself and of all these effects; and must be able to determine how, in conjunction with the other things in the Universe, they will affect its value as an organic whole. And not only this: we must also possess all this knowledge and with regard to the effects of every possible alternative; and must then be able to see by comparison that the total value due to the existence of the action in question will be greater than that which would be produced by any of these alternatives. But it is obvious that our causal knowledge alone is far too incomplete for us ever to assure ourselves of this result. Accordingly it follows that we never have any reason to suppose that an action is our duty: we can never be sure that any action will produce the greatest value possible.

Ethics, therefore, is quite unable to give us a list of duties: but there still remains a humbler task which may be possible for Practical Ethics. Although we cannot hope to discover which, in a given situation, is the best of all possible alternative actions, there may be some possibility of shewing which



among the alternatives, *likely to occur to any one*, will produce the greatest sum of good. This second task is certainly all that Ethics can ever have accomplished: and it is certainly all that it has ever collected materials for proving; since no one has ever attempted to exhaust the possible alternative actions in any particular case. Ethical philosophers have in fact confined their attention to a very limited class of actions, which have been selected because they are those which most commonly occur to mankind as possible alternatives. With regard to these they may possibly have shewn that one alternative is better, *i.e.* produces a greater total of value, than others. But it seems desirable to insist, that though they have represented this result as a determination of *duties*, it can never really have been so. For the term duty is certainly so used that, if we are subsequently persuaded that any possible action would have produced more good than the one we adopted, we admit that we failed to do our duty. It will, however, be a useful task if Ethics can determine which among alternatives *likely to occur* will produce the greatest total value. For, though this alternative cannot be proved to be the best possible, yet it may be better than any course of action which we should otherwise adopt (pp. 146-150).

The utmost, then, that Practical Ethics can hope to discover is which, among a few alternatives possible under certain circumstances, will, on the whole, produce the best result. It may tell us which is the best, in this sense, of certain alternatives about which we are likely to deliberate; and since we may also know that, even if we choose none of these, what we shall, in that case, do is unlikely to be as good as one of them, it may thus tell us which of the alternatives, among which we *can* choose, it is best to choose. If it could do this it would be sufficient for practical guidance.

But (3) it is plain that even this is a task of immense difficulty. It is difficult to see how we can establish even a probability that by doing one thing we shall obtain a better total

result than by doing another. I shall merely endeavour to point out how much is assumed, when we assume that there is a probability, and on what lines it seems possible that this assumption may be justified. It will be apparent that it has never yet been justified—that no sufficient reason has ever yet been found for considering one action more right or more wrong than another.

(a) The first difficulty in the way of establishing a probability that one course of action will give a better total result than another, lies in the fact that we have to take account of the effects of both throughout an infinite future (pp. 151–152).

(b) We must assume, then, that if the effects of one action are generally better than those of another, so far forward in the future as we are able to foresee any probable difference in their effects at all, then the total effect upon the Universe of the former action is also generally better. . . . The question remains then: Can we lay down any general rules to the effect that one among a few alternative actions will generally produce a greater total of good in the immediate future?

It is important to insist that this question, limited as it is, is the utmost, to which, with any knowledge we have at present or are likely to have for a long time to come, Practical Ethics can hope to give an answer. . . . An engineer is entitled to assert that, if a bridge be built in a certain way, it will probably bear certain loads for a certain time, but he can never be absolutely certain that it has been built in the way required, nor that, even if it has, some accident will not intervene to falsify his prediction. With an ethical law, the same must be the case, it can be no more than a generalisation: and here, owing to the comparative absence of accurate hypothetical knowledge, on which the prediction should be based, the probability is comparatively small. But finally, for an ethical generalisation, we require to know not

only what effects will be produced, but also what are the comparative values of those effects; and on this question too, it must be admitted, considering what a prevalent opinion Hedonism has been, that we are very liable to be mistaken. It is plain, then, that we are not soon likely to know more than that one kind of action will *generally* produce better effects than another; and that more than this has certainly never been proved. In no two cases will *all* the effects of any kind of action be precisely the same, because in each case some of the circumstances will differ; and although the effects, that are important for good or evil, may be generally the same, it is extremely unlikely that they will always be so.

(c) If, now, we confine ourselves to a search for actions which are *generally* better as means than any probable alternative, it seems possible to establish as much as this in defence of most of the rules most universally recognised by Common Sense (pp. 154-156).

Now all these rules seem to have two characteristics to which it is desirable to call attention. (1) They seem all to be such that, in any known state of society, a *general* observance of them *would* be good as a means. The conditions upon which their utility depends, namely the tendency to preserve and propagate life and the desire of property, seem to be so universal and so strong, that it would be impossible to remove them; and, this being so, we can say that, under any conditions which could actually be given, the general observance of these rules would be good as a means. For, while there seems no reason to think that their observance ever makes a society worse than one in which they are not observed, it is certainly necessary as a means for any state of things in which the greatest possible goods can be attained. And (2) these rules, since they can be recommended as a means to that which is itself only a necessary condition for the existence of any great good, can be defended independently of correct views upon the primary ethical ques-

tion of what is good in itself. On any view commonly taken, it seems certain that the preservation of civilised society, which these rules are necessary to effect, is necessary for the existence, in any great degree, of anything which may be held to be good in itself (pp. 157-158).

Since, as I have tried to shew, it is impossible to establish that any kind of action will produce a better total result than its alternative *in all* cases, it follows that in some cases the neglect of an established rule will probably be the best course of action possible. The question then arises: Can the individual ever be justified in assuming that his is one of these exceptional cases? And it seems that this question may be definitely answered in the negative (p. 162). In cases where example has any influence at all, the effect of an exceptional right action will generally be to encourage wrong ones. And this effect will probably be exercised not only on other persons but on the agent himself (p. 163). The individual can therefore be confidently recommended *always* to conform to rules which are both generally useful and generally practised (p. 164).

## CHAPTER XVI

### JOHN DEWEY

(1859—)

THOUGH Dewey's name has come to be associated outstandingly with the instrumental logic, and, more generally speaking, with the philosophy called pragmatism, his primary interest, it seems not too much to say, has been and is in ethics. He has denominated his logic instrumental because he holds thinking to be not the end of life but a means to that which is the end—the creation and enjoyment of goods. Life is first and its positive experiences are the goods of morality. Thinking exists to discover these when they are present but not enjoyed and to construct them when they are absent. Human ingenuity must make up for the absence of brute strength and divine succor; and only by systematic, constructive and coöperative thought-taking can man perpetuate as human goods the goods that naturally exist for both him and other animals.

Dewey set out on his ethical enterprise from Idealism in general and from T. H. Green in particular. He early objected, however, to the notion in Green that the process of realizing one's self is but filling out in finite form a pattern that already exists in some divine life. That is, he objected to the theologizing of ethics. Life has all the goods in it that man will ever get, and it but distracts the energy that might increase natural good to attribute to it a spiritualistic setting which, however unctuous, really, if true, makes human effort unnecessary. Such attribution leads, according to him, to the conception of thinking as contemplation and adoration rather than as manipulation and construction.

For better or for worse, Dewey has taken evolutionism seriously, as the student may see by reading his essay "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy." Green, we saw, did not take it seriously, for to him the processes of history and morality alike can never do more than reveal to human consciousness what already is fully realized in the divine consciousness. The moral problem, for him, was indeed the emancipation of man as spiritual from evolutionary and temporal contamination. Sidgwick accepted the evolutionary theory, but avoided as irrelevant to his particular problem of method what he called "the psychogonical question," that is the bearing of the origin of (moral) ideas upon their significance and value. Dewey is the first outstanding moralist in our list both to accept the theory and to build his ethics upon it.

This attempt involves a revision of both logic and ethics, to mention the two reconstructions most relevant to our present task. Evolutionary philosophy as logic explains all ideas, all thinking, functionally rather than statically. Men get ideas when neither impulse nor habit any longer serves them satisfactorily. Ideas are measured by their survival value to an animal organism that has hit upon them as a happy variation in a precarious world. This is as true of abstract notions, like truth and goodness, as of concrete ideas, as true of philosophy as of technology. Indeed it is the business of philosophy, according to Dewey, to generalize to life as a whole the attitude that has as science produced technologies. Thinking is dramatic rehearsal of possibilities before embarking upon performance. It is covert action in order to sample, to simplify, and to reduce the risk of overt action.

This motif Dewey has progressively developed in holding ideas, ideals, the ideal, at once to connote the imperfections of the real and to denote the way to improve it. The ideal is not the present order seen truly as a whole (idealism), nor is it another order contrasted with this one (critical realism); but it is the potentiality of the real revealed

through an organism dissatisfied with things as they are—revealed in such form as may, fortune favoring, be made real through the efficacy of human effort. Not only, then, does Dewey reduce thinking to an operation for the construction of goods, but he also raises practice to the level of intelligence, when practice is characterized by foresight. Pure reason is non-existent; intelligence does not operate in a vacuum. Foreseen possibilities are *real* possibilities, but they are possibilities *of conduct*. There is conduct that discloses no possibilities, conduct that is pushed from behind. But there is also conduct that is pulled from in front. Intelligent conduct makes satisfactions more secure by orienting them in a causal sequence that can in some measure be controlled. This security is the contribution of science; and it substitutes for the demand for certainty that has been the heart of Western religion, laying its burden alike upon both logic and ethics. This is the negative theme developed in the Gifford lectures, from which our selections are mainly taken.

Evolutionary philosophy as ethics, suggested already by the preceding account of it as logic, seizes upon our native experiences as the material of morality. We do not need reason as an organ for transcendental adventure, for we have sufficient value right at home if we could exploit it. At least since it is all that we do assuredly have, it is the part of wisdom to make the most of it before we go a-yearning for the improbable. It is no time to condemn human nature as bad and our natural goods as inadequate until we have educated the one and refined the other. Once men are thus empirically oriented, there is no good reason, says Dewey, for not taking the perfectly common sense view that value is whatever men prize, hold dear, desire. It is not something to be argued about by philosophers. Any abstract argument about what it is can be settled by asking whoever is concerned for a list of what he likes. It is the presence of

liking alone that makes value possible and the continued fulfillment of it that alone makes value actual.

Values, then, are, according to Dewey, immanent in natural human experience. They are whatever men actually do prize. Take them for what they are: if they are many, so much the better; if they are found in classes that aforesaid were vulgar, judge the classes by the values, rather than the values by the classes. When Dewey insists that values are *here*, he also indicates the very important social doctrine that they are *everywhere* here. No class has a monopoly upon them; if so, the chief task of man is to see that monopoly ended. To make values common to all men, to deepen them, and to guarantee them—this is the threefold problem common to philosophy, to science, to government. This the problem of man. The first step in the solution of the problem is the whole-hearted recognition that values are immanent in human experience, rather than secluded in some transcendental or conceptual realm accessible to common men only through priestly or philosophic or governmental intermediaries.

How intelligence may through science emancipate men from other distracting notions, increase these natural goods, and secure them for all men—this is the burden of the following selection. In it logic and ethics meet: thinking becomes instrumental to action, and action gets sanctioned by enjoyment.

### THE QUEST FOR CERTAINTY<sup>1</sup>

Conduct as moral may be defined as *activity called forth and directed by ideas of value or worth, where the values*

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the brief selections indicated in the notes immediately below, this illustration from Dewey is taken from Chapter X of *The Quest for Certainty*, entitled "The Construction of the Good," pp. 235-286. (Minton, Balch, New York, 1929.)



*concerned are so mutually incompatible as to require consideration and selection before an overt action is entered upon.*<sup>2</sup>

The practical problems which a thoughtful and progressive individual must consider in his own conduct will give the clue to the genuine problems of moral theory. The framework of the one is an outline of the other. The man who does not satisfy himself with sheer conventional conformity to the customs, the *ethos*, of his class . . . will have occasion (1) to search for the elements of good and bad, of positive and negative, value in the situations that confront him; (2) to consider the methods and principles by which he shall reach conclusions, and (3) to consider the relations between himself, his own capacities and satisfactions, and the ends and demands of the social situations in which he is placed.<sup>3</sup>

The problem of restoring integration and coöperation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes that should direct his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life. It is the problem of any philosophy that is not isolated from that life.

The attention which has been given to the fact that in its experimental procedure science has surrendered the separation between knowing and doing has its source in the fact that there is now provided within a limited, specialized and technical field the possibility and earnest, as far as theory is concerned, of effecting the needed integration in the wider field of collective human experience. Philosophy is called upon to be the theory of the practice, through ideas sufficiently definite to be operative in experimental endeavor, by which the integration may be made secure in actual experience. Its central problem is the relation that exists between the beliefs about the nature of things due to natural science

<sup>2</sup>Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 208.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

to beliefs about values—using that word to designate whatever is taken to have rightful authority in the direction of conduct. A philosophy which should take up this problem is struck first of all by the fact that beliefs about values are pretty much in the position in which beliefs about nature were before the scientific revolution. There is either a basic distrust of the capacity of experience to develop its own regulative standards, and an appeal to what philosophers call eternal values, in order to ensure regulation of belief and action; or there is acceptance of enjoyments actually experienced irrespective of the method or operation by which they are brought into existence. Complete bifurcation between rationalistic method and an empirical method has its final and most deeply human significance in the ways in which good and bad are thought of and acted for and upon.

As far as technical philosophy reflects this situation, there is division of theories of values into two kinds. On the one hand, goods and evils, in every region of life, as they are concretely experienced, are regarded as characteristic of an inferior order of Being—intrinsically inferior. Just because they are things of human experience, their worth must be estimated by reference to standards and ideals derived from ultimate reality. Their defects and perversion are attributed to the same fact; they are to be corrected and controlled through adoption of methods of conduct derived from loyalty to the requirements of Supreme Being. This philosophic formulation gets actuality and force from the fact that it is a rendering of the beliefs of men in general as far as they have come under the influence of institutional religion. Just as rational conceptions were once superimposed upon observed and temporal phenomena, so eternal values are superimposed upon experienced goods. In one case as in the other, the alternative is supposed to be confusion and lawlessness. Philosophers suppose these eternal values are

known by reason; the mass of persons that they are divinely revealed.

Nevertheless, with the expansion of secular interests, temporal values have enormously multiplied; they absorb more and more attention and energy. The sense of transcendent values has become enfeebled; instead of permeating all things in life, it is more and more restricted to special times and acts. The authority of the church to declare and impose divine will and purpose has narrowed. Whatever men say and profess, their tendency in the presence of actual evils is to resort to natural and empirical means to remedy them. But in formal belief, the old doctrine of the inherently disturbed and unworthy character of the goods and standards of ordinary experience persists. This divergence between what men do and what they nominally profess is closely connected with the confusions and conflicts of modern thought.

It is not meant to assert that no attempts have been made to replace the older theory regarding the authority of immutable and transcendent values by conceptions more congruous with the daily practices of daily life. The contrary is the case. The utilitarian theory, to take one instance, has had great power. The idealistic school is the only one in contemporary philosophies, with the exception of one form of neo-realism, that makes much of the notion of a reality which is all one with ultimate moral and religious values. But this school is also the one most concerned with the conservation of "spiritual" life. Equally significant is the fact that empirical theories retain the notion that thought and judgment are concerned with values that are experienced independently of them. For these theories, emotional satisfactions occupy the same place that sensations hold in traditional empiricism. Values are constituted by liking and enjoyment; to be enjoyed and to be a value are two names for one and

the same fact. Since science has extruded values from its objects, these empirical theories do everything possible to emphasize their purely subjective character of value. A psychological theory of desire and liking is supposed to cover the whole ground of the theory in values; in it, immediate feeling is the counterpart of immediate sensation.

I shall not object to this empirical theory as far as it connects the theory of values with concrete experiences of desire and satisfaction. The idea that there is such a connection is the only way known to me by which the pallid remoteness of the rationalistic theory, and the only too glaring presence of the institutional theory of transcendental values can be escaped. The objection is that the theory in question holds down value to objects *antecedently* enjoyed, apart from reference to the method by which they come into existence; it takes enjoyments which are causal because unregulated by intelligent operations to be values in and of themselves. Operational thinking needs to be applied to the judgment of values just as it has now finally been applied in conceptions of physical objects. Experimental empiricism in the field of ideas of good and bad is demanded to meet the conditions of the present situation.

The scientific revolution came about when material of direct and uncontrolled experience was taken as problematic; as supplying material to be transformed by reflective operations into known objects. The contrast between experienced and known objects was found to be a temporal one; namely, one between empirical subject-matters which were had or "given" prior to the acts of experimental variation and re-disposition and those which succeeded these acts and issued from them. The notion of an act whether of sense or thought which supplied a valid measure of thought in immediate knowledge was discredited. Consequences of operations became the important thing. The suggestion almost imperatively follows that escape from the defects of transcendental

absolutism is not to be had by setting up as values enjoyments that happen anyhow, but in defining value by enjoyments which are the consequences of intelligent action. Without the intervention of thought, enjoyments are not values but problematic goods, becoming values when they re-issue in a changed form from intelligent behavior. The fundamental trouble with the current empirical theory of values is that it merely formulates and justifies the socially prevailing habit of regarding enjoyments as they are actually experienced as values in and of themselves. It completely side-steps the question of regulation of these enjoyments. This issue involves nothing less than the problem of the directed reconstruction of economic, political and religious institutions.

There was seemingly a paradox involved in the notion that if we turned our backs upon the immediately perceived qualities of things, we should be enabled to form valid conceptions of objects, and that these conceptions could be used to bring about a more secure and more significant experience of them. But the method terminated in disclosing the connections or interactions upon which perceived objects, viewed as events, depend. Formal analogy suggests that we regard our direct and original experience of things liked and enjoyed as only *possibilities* of values to be achieved; that enjoyment becomes a value when we discover the relations upon which its presence depends. Such a causal and operational definition gives only a conception of a value, not a value itself. But the utilization of the conception in action results in an object having secure and significant value.

The formal statement may be given concrete content by pointing to the difference between the enjoyed and the enjoyable, the desired and the desirable, the *satisfying* and the *satisfactory*. To say that something is enjoyed is to make a statement about a fact, something already in existence; it is not to judge the value of that fact. There is no difference between such a proposition and one which says that some-

thing is sweet or sour, red or black. It is just correct or incorrect and that is the end of the matter. But to call an object a value is to assert that it satisfies or fulfills certain conditions. Function and status in meeting conditions is a different matter from bare existence. The fact that something is desired only raises the *question* of its desirability; it does not settle it. Only a child in the degree of his immaturity thinks to settle the question of desirability by reiterated proclamation: "I want it, I want it, I want it." What is objected to in the current empirical theory of values is not connection of them with desire and enjoyment but failure to distinguish between enjoyments of radically different sorts. There are many common expressions in which the difference of the two kinds is clearly recognized. Take for example the difference between the ideas of "satisfying" and "satisfactory." To say that something satisfies is to report something as an isolated finality. To assert that it is *satisfactory* is to define it in its connections and interactions. The fact that it pleases or is immediately congenial poses a problem to judgment. How shall the satisfaction be rated? Is it a value or is it not? Is it something to be prized and cherished, *to be enjoyed*? Not stern moralists alone but every-day experience informs us that finding satisfaction in a thing may be a warning, a summons to be on the lookout for consequences. To declare something *satisfactory* is to assert that it meets specifiable conditions. It is, in effect, a judgment that the thing "will do." It involves a prediction; it contemplates a future in which the thing will continue to serve; it *will* do. It asserts a consequence the thing will actively institute; it will *do*. That it is satisfying is the content of a proposition of fact; that it is satisfactory is a judgment, an estimate, an appraisal. It denotes an attitude *to be* taken, that of striving to perpetuate and to make secure.

It is worth notice that besides the instances given, there

are many other recognitions in ordinary speech of the distinction. The endings "able," "worthy" and "ful" are cases in point. Noted and notable, noteworthy; remarked and remarkable; advised and advisable; wondered at and wonderful; pleasing and beautiful; loved and lovable; blamed and blamable, blameworthy; objected to and objectionable; esteemed and estimable; admired and admirable; shamed and shameful; honored and honorable; approved and approvable, worthy of approbation, etc. The multiplication of words adds nothing to the force of the distinction. But it aids in conveying a sense of the fundamental character of the distinction; of the difference between mere report of an already existent fact and judgment as to the importance and need of bringing a fact into existence; or, if it is already there, of sustaining it in existence. The latter is a genuine practical judgment, and marks the only type of judgment that has to do with the direction of action. Whether or no we reserve the term "value" for the latter (as seems to me proper) is a minor matter; that the distinction be acknowledged as the key to understanding the relation of values to the direction of conduct is the important thing.

This element of direction by an idea of value applies to science as well as anywhere else. For in every scientific undertaking, there is passed a constant succession of estimates; such as "it is worth treating these facts as data or evidence; it is advisable to try this experience; to make that observation; to entertain such and such a hypothesis; to perform this calculation," etc.

The word "taste" has perhaps got too completely associated with arbitrary liking to express the nature of judgments of value. But if the word be used in the sense of an appreciation at once cultivated and active, one may say that the formation of taste is the chief matter wherever values enter in, whether intellectual, esthetic or moral. Relatively immediate judgments, which we call tact or to which we give

the name of intuition, do not precede reflective inquiry, but are the funded products of much thoughtful experience. Expertness of taste is at once the result and the reward of constant exercise of thinking. Instead of there being no disputing about tastes, they are the one thing worth disputing about, if by "dispute" is signified discussion involving reflective inquiry. Taste, if we use the word in its best sense, is the outcome of experience brought cumulatively to bear on the intelligent appreciation of the real worth of likings and enjoyments. There is nothing in which a person so completely reveals himself as in the things which he judges enjoyable and desirable. Such judgments are the sole alternative to the domination of belief by impulse, chance, blind habit and self-interest. The formation of a cultivated and effectively operative good judgment or taste with respect to what is esthetically admirable, intellectually acceptable and morally approvable is the supreme task set to human beings by the incidents of experience.

Propositions about what is or has been liked are of instrumental value in reaching judgments of value, in as far as the conditions and consequences of the thing liked are thought about. In themselves they make no claims; they put forth no demand upon subsequent attitudes and acts; they profess no authority to direct. If one likes a thing he likes it; that is a point about which there can be no dispute:—although it is not so easy to state just *what* is liked as is frequently assumed. A judgment about what is *to be* desired and enjoyed is, on the other hand, a claim on future action; it possesses *de jure* and not merely *de facto* quality. It is a matter of frequent experience that likings and enjoyments are of all kinds, and that many are such as reflective judgments condemn. By way of self-justification and "rationalization," an enjoyment creates a tendency to assert that the thing enjoyed is a value. This assertion of validity adds authority to the fact. It is a decision that the object has a



right to exist and hence a claim upon action to further its existence.

The analogy between the status of the theory of values and the theory of ideas about natural objects before the rise of experimental inquiry may be carried further. The sensationalistic theory of the origin and test of thought evoked, by way of reaction, the transcendental theory of *a priori* ideas. For it failed utterly to account for objective connection, order and regularity in objects observed. Similarly, any doctrine that identifies the mere fact of being liked with the value of the object liked so fails to give direction to conduct when direction is needed that it automatically calls forth the assertion that there are values eternally in Being that are the standards of all judgments and the obligatory ends of all action. Without the introduction of operational thinking, we oscillate between a theory that, in order to save the objectivity of judgments of values, isolates them from experience and nature, and a theory that, in order to save their concrete and human significance, reduces them to mere statements about our own feelings.

Not even the most devoted adherents of the notion that enjoyment and value are equivalent facts would venture to assert that because we have once liked a thing we should go on liking it; they are compelled to introduce the idea that *some* tastes are to be cultivated. Logically, there is no ground for introducing the idea of cultivation; liking is liking, and one is as good as another. If enjoyments *are* values, the judgment of value cannot regulate the form which liking takes; it cannot regulate its own conditions. Desire and purpose, and hence action, are left without guidance, although the question of regulation of their formation is the supreme problem of practical life. Values (to sum up) may be connected inherently with liking, and yet not with *every* liking but only with those that judgment has approved, after examination of the relation upon which the object liked

depends. A casual liking is one that happens without knowledge of how it occurs nor to what effect. The difference between it and one which is sought because of a judgment that it is worth having and is to be striven for, makes just the difference between enjoyments which are accidental and enjoyments that have value and hence a claim upon our attitude and conduct.

In any case, the alternative rationalistic theory does not afford the guidance for the sake of which eternal and immutable norms are appealed to. The scientist finds no help in determining the probable truth of some proposed theory by comparing it with a standard of absolute truth and immutable being. He has to reply upon definite operations undertaken under definite conditions—upon method. We can hardly imagine an architect getting aid in the construction of a building from an ideal at large, though we can understand his framing an ideal on the basis of knowledge of actual conditions and needs. Nor does the ideal of perfect beauty in antecedent Being give direction to a painter in producing a particular work of art. In morals, absolute perfection does not seem to be more than a generalized hypostatization of the recognition that there is a good to be sought, an obligation to be met—both being concrete matters. Nor is the defect in this respect merely negative. An examination of history would reveal, I am confident, that these general and remote schemes of value actually obtain a content definite enough and near enough to concrete situations as to afford guidance in action only by consecrating some institution or dogma already having social currency. Concreteness is gained, but it is by protecting from inquiry some accepted standard which perhaps is outworn and in need of criticism.

When theories of values do not afford intellectual assistance in framing ideas and beliefs about values that are adequate to direct action, the gap must be filled by other means. If intelligent method is lacking, prejudice, the pressure of

immediate circumstance, self-interest and class-interest, traditional customs, institutions of accidental historic origin, are *not* lacking, and they tend to take the place of intelligence. Thus we are led to our main proposition: *Judgments about values are judgments about the conditions and the results of experienced objects; judgments about that which should regulate the formation of our desires, affections and enjoyments.* For whatever decides their formation will determine the main course of our conduct, personal and social.

If it sounds strange to hear that we should frame our judgments as to what has value by considering the connections in existence of what we like and enjoy, the reply is not far to seek. As long as we do not engage in this inquiry enjoyments (values if we choose to apply that term) are casual; they are given by "nature," not constructed by art. Like natural objects in their qualitative existence, they at most only supply material for elaboration in rational discourse. A *feeling* of good or excellence is as far removed from goodness in fact as a feeling that objects are intellectually thus and so is removed from their being actually so. To recognize that the truth of natural objects can be reached only by the greatest care in selecting and arranging directed operations, and then to suppose that values can be truly determined by the mere fact of liking seems to leave us in an incredible position. All the serious perplexities of life come back to the genuine difficulty of forming a judgment as to the values of the situation; they come back to a conflict of goods. Only dogmatism can suppose that serious moral conflict is between something clearly bad and something known to be good, and that uncertainty lies wholly in the will of the one choosing. Most conflicts of importance are conflicts between things which are or have been satisfying, not between good and evil. And to suppose that we can make a hierarchical table of values at large once for all, a kind of catalogue in which they are arranged in an order of ascend-

ing or descending worth, is to indulge in a gloss on our inability to frame intelligent judgments in the concrete. Or else it is to dignify customary choice and prejudice by a title of honor.

The alternative to definition, classification and systematization of satisfactions just as they happen to occur is judgment of them by means of the relations under which they occur. If we know the conditions under which the act of liking, of desire and enjoyment, takes place, we are in a position to know what are the consequences of that act. The difference between the desired and the desirable, admired and the admirable, becomes effective at just this point. Consider the difference between the proposition "That thing has been eaten," and the judgment "That thing is edible." The former statement involves no knowledge of any relation except the one stated; while we are able to judge of the edibility of anything only when we have a knowledge of its interactions with other things sufficient to enable us to foresee its probable effects when it is taken into the organism and produces effects there.

To assume that anything can be known in isolation from its connections with other things is to identify knowing with merely having some object before perception or in feeling, and is thus to lose the key to the traits that distinguish an object as known. It is futile, even silly, to suppose that some quality that is directly present constitutes the whole of the thing presenting the quality. It does not do so when the quality is that of being hot or fluid or heavy, and it does not when the quality is that of giving pleasure, or being enjoyed. Such qualities are, once more, effects, ends in the sense of closing termini of processes involving causal connections. They are something to be investigated, challenges to inquiry and judgment. The more connections and interactions we ascertain, the more we *know* the object in question. Thinking is search for these connections. Heat experienced as a

consequence of directed operations has a meaning quite different from the heat that is casually experienced without knowledge of how it came about. The same is true of enjoyments. Enjoyments that issue from conduct directed by insight into relations have a meaning and a validity due to the way in which they are experienced. Such enjoyments are not repented of; they generate no after-taste of bitterness. Even in the midst of direct enjoyment, there is a sense of validity, of authorization, which intensifies the enjoyment. There is solicitude for perpetuation of the *object* having value which is radically different from mere anxiety to perpetuate the *feeling* of enjoyment.

Such statements as we have been making are, therefore, far from implying that there are values apart from things actually enjoyed as good. To find a thing *enjoyable* is, so to say, a *plus* enjoyment. We saw that it was foolish to treat the scientific object as a rival to or substitute for the perceived object, since the former is intermediate between uncertain and settled situations and those experienced under conditions of greater control. In the same way, judgment of the value of an object to be experienced is instrumental to appreciation of it when it is realized. But the notion that every object that happens to satisfy has an equal claim with every other to be a value is like supposing that every object of perception has the same cognitive force as every other. There is no knowledge without perception; but objects perceived are *known* only when they are determined as consequences of connective operations. There is no value except where there is satisfaction, but there have to be certain conditions fulfilled to transform a satisfaction into a value.

The time will come when it will be found passing strange that we of this age should take such pains to control by every means at command the formation of ideas of physical things, even those most remote from human concern, and yet are content with haphazard beliefs about the qualities

of objects that regulate our deepest interests; that we are scrupulous as to methods of forming ideas of natural objects, and either dogmatic or else driven by immediate conditions in framing those about values. There is, by implication, if not explicitly, a prevalent notion that values are already well known and that all which is lacking is the will to cultivate them in the order of their worth. In fact the most profound lack is not the will to act upon goods already known but the will to know what they are.

It is not a dream that it is possible to exercise some degree of regulation of the occurrence of enjoyments which are of value. Realization of the possibility is exemplified, for example, in the technologies and arts of industrial life—that is, up to a definite limit. Men desired heat, light, and speed of transit and of communication beyond what nature provides of itself. These things have been attained not by lauding the enjoyment of these things and preaching their desirability, but by study of the conditions of their manifestation. Knowledge of relations having been obtained, ability to produce followed, and enjoyment ensued as a matter of course. It is, however, an old story that enjoyment of these things as goods is no warrant of their bringing only good in their train. As Plato was given to pointing out, the physician may know to heal and the orator to persuade, but the ulterior knowledge of whether it is better for a man to be healed or to be persuaded to the orator's opinion remains unsettled. Here there appears the split between what are traditionally and conventionally called the values of the baser arts and the higher values of the truly personal and humane arts.

With respect to the former, there is no assumption that they can be had and enjoyed without definite operative knowledge. With respect to them it is also clear that the degree in which we value them is measurable by the pains taken to control the conditions of their occurrence. With

respect to the latter, it is assumed that no one who is honest can be in doubt what they are; that by revelation, or conscience, or the instruction of others, or immediate feeling, they are clear beyond question. And instead of action in their behalf being taken to be a measure of the extent in which things *are* values to us, it is assumed that the difficulty is to persuade men to act upon what they already know to be good. Knowledge of conditions and consequences is regarded as wholly indifferent to judging what is of serious value, though it is useful in a prudential way in trying to actualize it. In consequence, the existence of values that are by common consent of a secondary and technical sort are under a fair degree of control, while those denominated supreme and imperative are subject to all the winds of impulse, custom and arbitrary authority.

This distinction between higher and lower types of value is itself something to be looked into. Why should there be a sharp division made between some goods as physical and material and others as ideal and "spiritual"? The question touches the whole dualism of the material and the ideal at its root. To denominate anything "matter" or "material" is not in truth to disparage it. It is, if the designation is correctly applied, a way of indicating that the thing in question is a condition or means of the existence of something else. And disparagement of effective means is practically synonymous with disregard of the things that are termed, in eulogistic fashion, ideal and spiritual. For the latter terms if they have any concrete application at all signify something which is a desirable consummation of conditions, a cherished fulfillment of means. The sharp separation between material and ideal good thus deprives the latter of the underpinning of effective support while it opens the way for treating things which should be employed as means as ends in themselves. For since men cannot after all live without some measure of possession of such matters as

health and wealth, the latter things will be viewed as values and ends in isolation unless they are treated as integral constituents of the goods that are deemed supreme and final.

The relations that determine the occurrence of what human beings experience, especially when social connections are taken into account, are indefinitely wider and more complex than those that determine the events termed physical; the latter are the outcome of definite selective operations. This is the reason why we know something about remote objects like the stars better than we know significantly characteristic things about our own bodies and minds. We forget the infinite number of things we do not know about the stars, or rather that what we call a star is itself the product of the elimination, enforced and deliberate, of most of the traits that belong to an actual existence. The amount of knowledge we possess about stars would not seem very great or very important if it were carried over to human beings and exhausted our knowledge of them. It is inevitable that genuine knowledge of man and society should lag far behind physical knowledge.

But this difference is not a ground for making a sharp division between the two, nor does it account for the fact that we make so little use of the experimental method of forming our ideas and beliefs about the concerns of man in his characteristic social relations. For this separation religions and philosophies must admit some responsibility. They have erected a distinction between a narrower scope of relations and a wider and fuller one into a difference of kind, naming one kind material, and the other mental and moral. They have charged themselves gratuitously with the office of diffusing belief in the necessity of the division, and with instilling contempt for the material as something inferior in kind in its intrinsic nature and worth. Formal philosophies undergo evaporation of their technical solid contents; in a thinner and more viable form they find their



way into the minds of those who know nothing of their original forms. When these diffuse and, so to say, airy emanations re-crystallize in the popular mind they form a hard deposit of opinion that alters slowly and with great difficulty.

What difference would it actually make in the arts of conduct, personal and social, if the experimental theory were adopted not as a mere theory, but as a part of the working equipment of habitual attitudes on the part of everyone? It would be impossible, even were time given, to answer the question in adequate detail, just as men could not foretell in advance the consequences for knowledge of adopting the experimental method. It is the nature of the method that it has to be tried. But there are generic lines of differences which, within the limits of time at disposal, may be sketched.

Change from forming ideas and judgments of value on the basis of conformity to antecedent objects, to constructing enjoyable objects directed by knowledge of consequences, is a change from looking to the past to looking to the future. I do not for a moment suppose that the experiences of the past, personal and social, are of no importance. For without them we should not be able to frame any ideas whatever of the conditions under which objects are enjoyed nor any estimate of the consequences of esteeming and liking them. But past experiences are significant in giving us intellectual instrumentalities of judging just these points. They are tools, not finalities. Reflection upon what we have liked and have enjoyed is a necessity. But it tells us nothing about the *value* of these things until enjoyments are themselves reflectively controlled, or, until, as they are now recalled, we form the best judgment possible about what led us to like this sort of thing and what has issued from the fact that we liked it.

We are not, then, to get away from enjoyments experienced in the past and from recall of them, but from the

notion that they are the arbiters of things to be further enjoyed. At present, the arbiter is found in the past, although there are many ways of interpreting what in the past is authoritative. Nominally, the most influential conception doubtless is that of a revelation once had or a perfect life once lived. Reliance upon precedent, upon institutions created in the past, especially in law, upon rules of morals that have come to us through unexamined customs, upon uncriticized tradition, are other forms of dependence. It is not for a moment suggested that we can get away from customs and established institutions. A mere break would doubtless result simply in chaos. But there is no danger of such a break. Mankind is too inertly conservative both by constitution and by education to give the idea of this danger actuality. What there is genuine danger of is that the force of new conditions will produce disruption externally and mechanically: this is an ever present danger. The prospect is increased, not mitigated, by that conservatism which insists upon the adequacy of old standards to meet new conditions. What is needed is intelligent examination of the consequences that are actually effected by inherited institutions and customs, in order that there may be intelligent consideration of the ways in which they are to be intentionally modified in behalf of generation of different consequences.

This is the significant meaning of transfer of experimental method from the technical field of physical experience to the wider field of human life. We trust the method in forming our beliefs about things not directly connected with human life. In effect, we distrust it in moral, political and economic affairs. In the fine arts, there are many signs of a change. In the past, such a change has often been an omen and precursor of changes in other human attitudes. But, generally speaking, the idea of actively adopting experimental method in social affairs in the matters deemed of most enduring and

ultimate worth, strikes most persons as a surrender of all standards and regulative authority. But in principle, experimental method does not signify random and aimless action; it implies direction by ideas and knowledge. The question at issue is a practical one. Are there in existence the ideas and the knowledge that permit experimental method to be effectively used in social interests and affairs?

Where will regulation come from if we surrender familiar and traditionally prized values as our directive standards? Very largely from the findings of the natural sciences. For one of the effects of the separation drawn between knowledge and action is to deprive scientific knowledge of its proper service as a guide of conduct—except once more in those technological fields which have been degraded to an inferior rank. Of course, the complexity of the conditions upon which objects of human and liberal value depend is a great obstacle, and it would be too optimistic to say that we have as yet enough knowledge of the scientific type to enable us to regulate our judgments of value very extensively. But we have more knowledge than we try to put to use, and until we try more systematically we shall not know what are the important gaps in our sciences judged from the point of view of their moral and humane use.

For moralists usually draw a sharp line between the field of the natural sciences and the conduct that is regarded as moral. But a moral that frames its judgments of value on the basis of consequences must depend in a most intimate manner upon the conclusions of science. For the knowledge of the relations between changes which enable us to connect things as antecedents and consequences *is* science. The narrow scope which moralists often give to morals, their isolation of some conduct as virtuous and vicious from other large ranges of conduct, those having to do with health and vigor, business, education, with all the affairs in which desires and affection are implicated, is perpetuated by this

habit of exclusion of the subject-matter of natural science from a rôle in formation of moral standards and ideals. The same attitude operates in the other direction to keep natural science a technical specialty, and it works unconsciously to encourage its use exclusively in regions where it can be turned to personal and class advantage, as in war and trade.

Another great difference to be made by carrying the experimental habit into all matter of practice is that it cuts the roots of what is often called subjectivism, but which is better termed egoism. The subjective attitude is much more wide-spread than would be inferred from the philosophies which have that label attached. It is as rampant in realistic philosophies as in any others, sometimes even more so, although disguised from those who hold these philosophies under the cover of reverence of and enjoyment of ultimate values. For the implication of placing the standard of thought and knowledge in antecedent existence is that our thought makes no difference in what is significantly real. It then affects only our own attitude toward it.

This constant throwing of emphasis back upon a change made in ourselves instead of one made in the world in which we live seems to me the essence of what is objectionable in "subjectivism." Its taint hangs about even Platonic realism with its insistent evangelical dwelling upon the change made within the mind by contemplation of the realm of essence, and its depreciation of action as transient and all but sordid—a concession to the necessities of organic existence. All the theories which put conversion "of the eye of the soul" in the place of a conversion of natural and social objects that modifies goods actually experienced, is a retreat and escape from existence—and this retraction into self is, once more, the heart of subjective egoisms. The typical example is perhaps the other-worldliness found in religions whose chief concern is with the salvation of the personal soul. But other-

worldliness is found as well in estheticism and in all seclusion within ivory towers.

It is not in the least implied that change in personal attitudes, in the disposition of the "subject," is not of great importance. Such change, on the contrary, is involved in any attempt to modify the conditions of the environment. But there is a radical difference between a change in the self that is cultivated and valued as an end, and one that is a means to alteration, through action, of objective conditions. The Aristotelian-medieval conviction that highest bliss is found in contemplative possession of ultimate Being presents an ideal attractive to some types of mind; it sets forth a refined sort of enjoyment. It is a doctrine congenial to minds that despair of the effort involved in creation of a better world of daily experience. It is, apart from theological attachments, a doctrine sure to recur when social conditions are so troubled as to make actual endeavor seem hopeless. But the subjectivism so externally marked in modern thought as compared with ancient is either a development of the old doctrine under new conditions or is of merely technical import. The medieval version of the doctrine at least had the active support of a great social institution by means of which man could be brought into the state of mind that prepared him for ultimate enjoyment of eternal Being. It had a certain solidity and depth which is lacking in modern theories that would attain the result by merely emotional or speculative procedures, or by any means not demanding a change in objective existence so as to render objects of value more empirically secure.

The nature in detail of the revolution that would be wrought by carrying into the region of values the principle now embodied in scientific practice cannot be told; to attempt it would violate the fundamental idea that we know only after we have acted and in consequences of the outcome of action. But it would surely effect a transfer of attention

and energy from the subjective to the objective. Men would think of themselves as agents not as ends; ends would be found in experienced enjoyment of the fruits of a transforming activity. In as far as the subjectivity of modern thought represents a discovery of the part played by personal responses, organic and acquired, in the causal production of the qualities and values of objects, it marks the possibility of a decisive gain. It puts us in possession of some of the conditions that control the occurrence of experienced objects, and thereby it supplies us with an instrument of regulation. There is something querulous in the sweeping denial that things as experienced, as perceived and enjoyed, in any way depend upon interaction with human selves. The error of doctrines that have exploited the part played by personal and subjective reactions in determining what is perceived and enjoyed lies either in exaggerating this factor of constitution into the sole condition—as happens in subjective idealism—or else in treating it as a finality instead of, as with all knowledge, an instrument in direction of further action.

A third significant change that would issue from carrying over experimental method from physics to man concerns the import of standards, principles, rules. With the transfer, these, and all tenets and creeds about good and goods, would be recognized to be hypotheses. Instead of being rigidly fixed, they would be treated as intellectual instruments to be tested and confirmed—and altered—through consequences effected by acting upon them. They would lose all pretence of finality—the ulterior source of dogmatism. It is both astonishing and depressing that so much of the energy of mankind has gone into fighting for (with weapons of the flesh as well as of the spirit) the truth of creeds, religious, moral and political, as distinct from what has gone into effort to try creeds by putting them to the test of acting upon them. The change would do away with the intolerance and fanaticism that attend the notion that beliefs

and judgments are capable of inherent truth and authority; inherent in the sense of being independent of what they lead to when used as directive principles. The transformation does not imply merely that men are responsible for acting upon what they profess to believe; that is an old doctrine. It goes much further. Any belief as such is tentative, hypothetical; it is not just to be acted upon, but is to be *framed* with reference to its office as a guide to action. Consequently, it should be the last thing in the world to be picked up casually and then clung to rigidly. When it is apprehended as a tool and only a tool, an instrumentality of direction, the same scrupulous attention will go to its formation as now goes into the making of instruments of precision in technical fields. Men, instead of being proud of accepting and asserting beliefs and "principles" on the ground of loyalty, will be as ashamed of that procedure as they would now be to confess their assent to a scientific theory out of reverence for Newton or Helmholtz or whomever, without regard to evidence.

If one stops to consider the matter, is there not something strange in the fact that men should consider loyalty to "laws," principles, standards, ideals to be an inherent virtue, accounted unto them for righteousness? It is as if they were making up for some secret sense of weakness by rigidity and intensity of insistent attachment. A moral law, like a law in physics, is not something to swear by and stick to at all hazards; it is a formula of the way to respond when specified conditions present themselves. Its soundness and pertinence are tested by what happens when it is acted upon. Its claim or authority rests finally upon the imperativeness of the situation that has to be dealt with, not upon its own intrinsic nature—as any tool achieves dignity in the measure of needs served by it. The idea that adherence to standards external to experienced objects is the only alternative to confusion and lawlessness was once held in science. But knowl-

edge became steadily progressive when it was abandoned, and clues and tests found within concrete acts and objects were employed. The test of consequences is more exacting than that afforded by fixed general rules. In addition, it secures constant development, for when new acts are tried new results are experienced, while the lauded immutability of eternal ideals and norms is in itself a denial of the possibility of development and improvement.

The various modifications that would result from adoption in social and humane subjects of the experimental way of thinking are perhaps summed up in saying that it would place *method and means* upon the level of importance that has, in the past, been imputed exclusively to ends. Means have been regarded as menial, and the useful as the servile. Means have been treated as poor relations to be endured, but not inherently welcome. The very meaning of the word "ideals" is significant of the divorce which has obtained between means and ends. "Ideals" are thought to be remote and inaccessible of attainment; they are too high and fine to be sullied by realization. They serve vaguely to arouse "aspiration," but they do not evoke and direct strivings for embodiment in actual existence. They hover in an indefinite way over the actual scene; they are expiring ghosts of a once significant kingdom of divine reality whose rule penetrated to every detail of life.

It is impossible to form a just estimate of the paralysis of effort that has been produced by indifference to means. Logically, it is truistic that lack of consideration for means signifies that so-called ends are not taken seriously. It is as if one professed devotion to painting pictures conjoined with contempt for canvas, brush and paints; or love of music on condition that no instruments, whether the voice or something external, be used to make sounds. The good workman in the arts is known by his respect for his tools and by his interest in perfecting his technique. The glorification in



the arts of ends at the expense of means would be taken to be a sign of complete insincerity or even insanity. Ends separated from means are either sentimental indulgences or if they happen to exist are merely accidental. The ineffectiveness in action of "ideals" is due precisely to the supposition that means and ends are not on exactly the same level with respect to the attention and care they demand.

It is, however, much easier to point out the formal contradiction implied in ideals that are professed without equal regard for the instruments and techniques of their realization, than it is to appreciate the concrete ways in which belief in their separation has found its way into life and borne corrupt and poisonous fruits. The separation marks the form in which the traditional divorce of theory and practice has expressed itself in actual life. It accounts for the relative impotency of arts concerned with enduring human welfare. Sentimental attachment and subjective eulogy take the place of action. For there is no art without tools and instrumental agencies. But it also explains the fact that in actual behavior, energies devoted to matters nominally thought to be inferior, material and sordid, engross attention and interest. After a polite and pious deference has been paid to "ideals," men feel free to devote themselves to matters which are more immediate and pressing.

It is usual to condemn the amount of attention paid by people in general to material ease, comfort, wealth, and success gained by competition, on the ground that they give to mere means the attention that ought to be given to ends, or that they have taken for ends things which in reality are only means. Criticisms of the place which economic interest and action occupy in present life are full of complaints that men allow lower aims to usurp the place that belongs to higher and ideal values. The final source of the trouble is, however, that moral and spiritual "leaders" have propagated the notion that ideal ends may be cultivated

in isolation from "material" means, as if means and material were not synonymous. While they condemn men for giving to means the thought and energy that ought to go to ends, the condemnation should go to them. For they have not taught their followers to think of material and economic activities as *really* means. They have been unwilling to frame their conception of the values that should be regulative of human conduct on the basis of the actual conditions and operations by which alone values can be actualized.

Practical needs are imminent; with the mass of mankind they are imperative. Moreover, speaking generally, men are formed to act rather than to theorize. Since the ideal ends are so remotely and accidentally connected with immediate and urgent conditions that need attention, after lip service is given to them, men naturally devote themselves to the latter. If a bird in the hand is worth two in a neighboring bush, an actuality in hand is worth, for the direction of conduct, many ideals that are so remote as to be invisible and inaccessible. Men hoist the banner of the ideal, and then march in the direction that concrete conditions suggest and reward.

Deliberate insincerity and hypocrisy are rare. But the notion that action and sentiment are inherently unified in the constitution of human nature has nothing to justify it. Integration is something to be achieved. Division of attitudes and responses, compartmentalizing of interests, is easily acquired. It goes deep just because the acquisition is unconscious, a matter of habitual adaptation of conditions. Theory separated from concrete doing and making is empty and futile; practice then becomes an immediate seizure of opportunities and enjoyments which conditions afford without the direction which theory—knowledge and ideas—has power to supply. The problem of the relation of theory and practice is not a problem of theory alone; it is that, but it is also the most practical problem of life. For it is the question of how intelligence may inform action, and how action may

bear the fruit of increased insight into meaning: a clear view of the values that are worth while and of the means by which they are to be made secure in experienced objects. Construction of ideals in general and their sentimental glorification are easy; the responsibilities both of studious thought and of action are shirked. Persons having the advantage of positions of leisure and who find pleasure in abstract theorizing—a most delightful indulgence to those to whom it appeals—have a large measure of liability for a cultivated diffusion of ideals and aims that are separated from the conditions which are the means of actualization. Then other persons who find themselves in positions of social power and authority readily claim to be the bearers and defenders of ideal ends in church and state. They then use the prestige and authority their representative capacity as guardians of the highest ends confers on them to cover actions taken in behalf of the harshest and narrowest of material ends.

The present state of industrial life seems to give a fair index of the existing separation of means and ends. Isolation of economics from ideal ends, whether of morals or of organized social life, was proclaimed by Aristotle. Certain things, he said, are conditions of a worthy life, personal and social, but are not constituents of it. The economic life of man, concerned with satisfaction of wants, is of this nature. Men have wants and they must be satisfied. But they are only prerequisites of a good life, not intrinsic elements in it. Most philosophers have not been so frank nor perhaps so logical. But upon the whole, economics has been treated as on a lower level than either morals or politics. Yet the life which men, women and children actually lead, the opportunities open to them, the values they are capable of enjoying, their education, their share in all the things of art and science, are mainly determined by economic conditions. Hence we can hardly expect a moral system which ignores

economic conditions to be other than remote and empty.

Industrial life is correspondingly brutalized by failure to equate it as the means by which social and cultural values are realized. That the economic life, thus exiled from the pale of higher values, takes revenge by declaring that it is the only social reality, and by means of the doctrine of materialistic determination of institutions and conduct in all fields, denies to deliberate morals and politics any share of causal regulation, is not surprising.

When economists were told that their subject-matter was merely material, they naturally thought they could be "scientific" only by excluding all reference to distinctively human values. Material wants, efforts to satisfy them, even the scientifically regulated technologies highly developed in industrial activity, are then taken to form a complete and closed field. If any reference to social ends and values is introduced it is by way of an external addition, mainly hortatory. That economic life largely determines the conditions under which mankind has access to concrete values may be recognized or it may not be. In either case, the notion that it is the means to be utilized in order to secure significant values as the common and shared possession of mankind is alien and inoperative. To many persons, the idea that the ends professed by morals are impotent save as they are connected with the working machinery of economic life seems like deflowering the purity of moral values and obligations.

The social and moral effects of the separation of theory and practice have been merely hinted at. They are so manifold and so pervasive that an adequate consideration of them would involve nothing less than a survey of the whole field of morals, economics and politics. It cannot be justly stated that these effects are in fact direct consequences of the quest for certainty by thought and knowledge isolated from action. For, as we have seen, this quest was itself a reflex

product of actual conditions. But it may be truly asserted that this quest, undertaken in religion and philosophy, has had results which have reinforced the conditions which originally brought it about. Moreover, search for safety and consolation amid the perils of life by means other than intelligent action, by feeling and thought alone, began when actual means of control were lacking, when arts were undeveloped. It had then a relative historic justification that is now lacking. The primary problem for thinking which lays claim to be philosophic in its breadth and depth is to assist in bringing about a reconstruction of all beliefs rooted in a basic separation of knowledge and action; to develop a system of operative ideas congruous with present knowledge and with present facilities of control over natural events and energies.

We have noted more than once how modern philosophy has been absorbed in the problem of affecting an adjustment between the conclusions of natural science and the beliefs and values that have authority in the direction of life. The genuine and poignant issue does not reside where philosophers for the most part have placed it. It does not consist in accommodation to each other of two realms, one physical and the other ideal and spiritual, nor in the reconciliation of the "categories" of theoretical and practical reason. It is found in that isolation of executive means and ideal interests which has grown up under the influence of the separation of theory and practice. For this, by nature, involves the separation of the material and the spiritual. Its solution, therefore, can be found only in action wherein the phenomena of material and economic life are equated with the purposes that command the loyalties of affection and purpose, and in which ends and ideals are framed in terms of the possibilities of actually experienced situations. But while the solution cannot be found in "thought" alone, it can be furthered by

thinking which is operative—which frames and defines ideas in terms of what may be done, and which uses the conclusions of science as instrumentalities. William James was well within the bounds of moderation when he said that looking forward instead of backward, looking to what the world and life might become instead of to what they have been, is an alteration in the “seat of authority.”

It was incidentally remarked earlier in our discussion that the serious defect in the current empirical philosophy of values, the one which identifies them with things actually enjoyed irrespective of the conditions upon which they depend, is that it formulates and in so far consecrates the conditions of our present social experience. Just as the theory of the separation of theory and practice has a practical origin and a momentous practical consequence, so the empirical theory that values are identical with whatever men actually enjoy, no matter how or what, formulates an aspect, and an undesirable one, of the present social situation.

For while our discussion has given attention to the other type of philosophical doctrine, that which holds that regulative and authoritative standards are found in transcendent eternal values, it has not passed in silence over the fact that actually the greater part of the activities of the greater number of human beings is spent in effort to seize upon and hold onto such enjoyments as the actual scene permits. Their energies and their enjoyments are controlled in fact, but they are controlled by external conditions rather than by intelligent judgment and endeavor. If philosophies have any influence over the thoughts and acts of men, it is a serious matter that the most widely held empirical theory should in effect justify this state of things by identifying values with the objects of any interest as such. As long as the only theories of value placed before us for intellectual assent alternate between sending us to a realm of eternal and fixed values and sending us to enjoyments such as actually obtain,

the formulation, even as only a theory, of an experimental empiricism which finds values to be identical with goods that are the fruit of intelligently directed activity has its measure of practical significance.